Ireland vol 15

REVIEW

OF A

PUBLICATION,

ENTITLED, THE

SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN FOSTER,

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS OF IRELAND.

IN

A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO HIM

By WILLIAM SMITH, Esq. M. P.

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A NEW EDITION.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Letter ſtands in need of indulgence, and is perhaps, in ſome degree, entitled to it. It was begun on Tueſday laſt (the publication which it purports to anſwer having appeared only the day before), and has been written ſo expeditiouſly, that the whole of the work (or indeed one fourth of it) has never been at once under the Writer's eye; nor had he even time for reading over his own manuſcript, but was obliged to confine his corrections to thoſe which he could make in reviſing proofs.

The conſequence, perhaps, may be many faults of ſtyle, and ſome repetitions, owing to the Writer's not having been able to aſcertain, with ſufficient exactneſs, what he had already treated, from his ſending the ſheets to preſs nearly as faſt as they were written.

He does not, however, expect that this hurry ſhould excuſe him for faults of argument or ſtatement into which he may have fallen. He ſhould not have ventured to ſubmit his thoughts ſo haſtily to the Public, but that he had already reflected ſufficiently

ſufficiently upon his ſubject, to make him hope that expedition could do little more than affect the ſtyle; a conſideration which he conceived to be ſo ſubordinate, as that it might be well to ſacrifice it to the deſire of an early publication.

But it may be aſked, why the Writer has choſen this mode of replying to a Speech, which, as a Member of Parliament, he had the privilege of anſwering in his place. The fact is, that nothing could be more juſt or reaſonable than the claim of the diſtinguiſhed Perſonage to whom this Letter is addreſſed, to be heard upon the great queſtion of a Legiſlative Union upon the firſt opportunity that preſented itſelf for delivering his ſentiments; but for the Writer of this Letter, who had already, on a former occaſion, obtained a long and patient hearing, to have again addreſſed the Houſe on the ſubject of Union, when that queſtion was not before them, would have been highly unreaſonable and preſumptuous.

It only remains to obſerve, that the following Letter is not intended as an original argument, or full inveſtigation of the Queſtion of Union. It is an anſwer to the Speech publiſhed as the Speaker's. In an Addreſs to the People of Ireland, the Writer has gone into a more direct diſcuſſion of the queſtion itſelf, and thought it would be wrong here to repeat arguments which he had already offered to the Public.

A

LETTER,

&c.

SIR,

THE Speech lately publiſhed as yours *, I had the good fortune of hearing you deliver; and in common, I apprehend, with the reſt of your auditors, regarded it as a ſplendid and convincing proof that your reputation for Commercial Knowledge is as merited, as it is high. Indeed, if the ability of a Speech were to be eſtimated by the rich abundance of information which it contains, the excellence of yours would not admit of controverſy: neither can I altogether withhold from it the praiſe to which a judicious ſelection of topics is entitled; and ſtill leſs am I diſpoſed to conteſt its claim to approbation on the ground of acuteneſs, perſpicuity, and logical preciſion; qualities,

* Printed by Moore, in College Green; and reprinted by Robinſons, London.

in which if it be in any degree deficient, the defect is not attributable to you, but to the weakneſs of the opinion which it was your taſk to ſupport.

But if, towards eſtimating the value of an argument, we muſt advert to the concluſion which it is intended to inculcate, and can pronounce it able, only in proportion as it is convincing, I ſhall be obliged to withhold the praiſe of ability from yours; for though I liſtened to it with unintermitted and unprejudiced attention, and with a mind ſufficiently full of the ſubject which it treated, to render me the more capable of weighing the reaſons which it contained, yet I proteſt it totally failed of carrying conviction to my mind.

To this failure, Sir, you are to impute the trouble of my preſent Letter; in which, without deviating from that reſpect which is due to you, I ſhall endeavour to anſwer the arguments which you have advanced. I am apprized of the vaſt interval which there is between us, in point of talents and information; but great as it may be, I conceive it, on the preſent queſtion, to be filled up by the ſuperior force and number of thoſe proofs, which offer themſelves in favour of the opinion that I have embraced; and I feel a confidence, not ſo much in myſelf, as in my poſition.

I ſhall, in the following pages, aim at no ſtricter order than that which will ariſe from my attending

you

you regularly through your topics; and, agreeably to this looſe arrangement, ſhall begin by noticing your firſt:

You ſet out by aſſerting that the Adjuſtment of 1782 was a final one; a poſition which I conceive to be as true, as it is irrelevant; and which therefore I am not diſpoſed to controvert, but only to explain.

Indeed, it is ſtrangely uſual to omit adjuſting the meaning of propoſitions, before we give them our aſſent. I believe it is Locke who has laid it down, than an accurate definition may preclude a world of argument; and, conformably to his opinion, I am inclined to expect, that, after having examined the meaning of the poſition which I have juſt noticed, we ſhall deem an attempt to draw from it any thing illuſtrative of the queſtion of Union, about as hopeful as the Lagado ſcheme of extracting ſun-beams from cucumbers.

The meaſures of 1782 muſt have had reference to that out of which they aroſe; and the adjuſtment been of ſomething, which had been in controverſy: for I cannot conceive a ſettlement, without ſome ſubject matter for it to operate upon; nor extend its operation beyond the limits of thoſe doubts, or controverſies, to which it was meant to put an end.

Now, what was the ſubject matter of the Settlement of 1782? The claim of the Britiſh Parliament to enact laws, that ſhould bind Ireland; and the denial, on the part of Ireland, of the juſtice of this claim.

The right of legiſlating for Ireland had not only been, for centuries, practically aſſerted by the Parliament of England, but had been expreſſly recogniſed, and inſiſted on, by legal and conſtitutional writers; and been by them referred to the principle of Iriſh dependance and ſubordination; a principle, ſtill more mortifying to the ſpirit of this country, than even the deduction of a right to legiſlative control, which it ſupported.

The pride of Iriſhmen was naturally offended at finding it laid down by a Commentator on the Laws of England*, that where this country was particularly named, or included within general words, there could be no doubt but ſhe was bound by all Acts of the Britiſh Legiſlature; nor was the jealouſy, which this doctrine was calculated to inſpire, appeaſed by the information, which the ſame writer gave them, that "it followed from the very nature and conſtitution of a dependant ſtate:" ſtill leſs, were they likely to be ſoothed by a review of the ſervile and invidious proviſions, by which the ſtatutes of Sir Edward Poynings had degraded our Parliament, in order to rivet our dependance;—or

* Blackſtone.

of the want of that ſecurity to the liberties of the ſubject, which the inhabitants of England derived from the frame and limited duration of their Mutiny Bill.

The aſſertion of ſuch claims on the part of Britain, and denial of their juſtice by the Parliament of this country,—the degrading ſyſtem by which, on the one hand, theſe claims were ſupported, and the impatience with which both claims and ſyſtem were brooked upon the other,—inevitably produced a controverſy the moſt momentous in its aſpect, and to which the Settlement of 1782 very fortunately put an end. I accede to your enumeration of thoſe grievances *, of which, at that period, the removal was deſired: you truly ſtate them to have conſiſted of Great Britain's claim to bind this country; the appellant juriſdiction †; the proviſions of Poynings' Law; and the frame and perpetuity of the Mutiny Bill. The firſt of theſe grievances (viz. the claim of Britain) was the grand point in iſſue, and to which the others were either appurtenant or allied; and as for the third and fourth, they formed no ſubject of controverſy between the two nations; but furniſhed mere matter for internal regulation. In 1782 theſe grievances were removed; and I cannot but exult at our having then been freed from a ſyſtem of control, too degrading and oppreſſive to this country,

* Page 9.

† Which ſecond was a *merely theoretic* grievance.

to

to be juſtified by that conſolidation of the empire, at which it aimed; and which, if not yet ſo firmly ſecured as every true friend to Britiſh connexion muſt deſire, is yet attainable, by meaſures which the Iriſh Parliament is competent to adopt, and which I too much reſpect the Arrangement of 1782, to charge it with having placed beyond their reach.

I agree with you, Sir, that the Adjuſtment of 1782 and 1783 was final; and that the Acts of the 22d and 23d of the King, by repealing the 6th of Geo. I. and declaring that the people of Ireland ſhould be bound only by laws enacted by the Parliament of this kingdom, formed a compact between the countries, which, without a groſs breach of faith, Great Britain cannot violate; and of which Iriſhmen ought not to yield the benefit, but with their lives.

Therefore, if you ſhow me any breach of this ſolemn and final Settlement—any attempt on the part of England to legiſlate for this country, or invade the ſupremacy of our courts of juſtice, or our Parliament—I ſhall join with you in proteſting againſt the injuſtice of ſuch conduct; but until this be ſhown, you muſt allow me to doubt the pertinence of thoſe reiterations, that the Adjuſtment of 1782 was final, which principally occupy more than forty pages of your Speech:—you are continually pointing to your premiſes, when I am looking for your concluſion; and waſting your time in laying

laying foundations which will ſupport no fabric material to the preſent queſtion.

Can you, Mr. Speaker, a man of undoubted and diſtinguiſhed talents, mean ſeriouſly to contend, that the Britiſh Parliament in 1782, by diſclaiming the right of binding this country by its ſtatutes, precluded the Iriſh Parliament from deliberating on the expediency of a Legiſlative Union, and adopting or rejecting it, according to the reſult of ſuch deliberation?—I am averſe from imputing to you an argument which ſtrikes my underſtanding to be ſo unſuitably feeble; yet find it difficult (excuſe my freedom) to acquit you of having been rather profuſe of irrelevant aſſertion, unleſs by attributing to you the deſign of perverting thoſe aſſertions, and founding arguments upon them which a judgment, incomparably beneath yours, ſhould perceive they never can ſuſtain. I am driven to ſuſpect, that in aſſerting the Adjuſtment of 1782 to have been final, you inſinuate it to have been preclusive; and that in ſettling the controverſies from whence it flowed (and which alone it could affect), it incapacitated one of two independent countries from ſubmitting a ſyſtem to the conſideration of another; and diſqualified this latter from inveſtigating the merits of the plan thus offered, and adopting it, if it ſeem calculated for the benefit of both.

To me it appears too clear for argument, that the Adjuſtment which finally diſclaimed the right of Great Britain to legiſlate for Ireland, and thus put an end to all controverſies which had been generated by ſuch a claim, did not affect the right of the Iriſh Legiſlature, in its wiſdom, thereafter, to adopt ſuch arrangements as circumſtances might require, and as ſhould ſeem conducive to the welfare of this kingdom, and the empire.

To me it appears like ſomething worſe than extraordinary doctrine, that the Adjuſtment which recogniſed the legiſlative ſupremacy of the Iriſh Parliament, at the ſame time precluded it from exerciſing its ſupreme authority, by the adoption of a meaſure, which it deemed pregnant with advantages to that country over whoſe intereſts it preſided.

When the Britiſh Parliament renounced its claim of dictating to this country, did it part with the harmleſs right of recommending a meaſure to our conſideration? Did His Majeſty, in aſſenting to any of the meaſures of 1782, deprive himſelf of the innoxious privilege of ſuggeſting to a future Iriſh Parliament, which he ſhould aſſemble to conſult *de arduis regni*, the conſideration of a meaſure which, to his royal wiſdom, ſeemed calculated to meet the arduous ſituation of the empire? Did the Iriſh Parliament, by the ſhare which it took in the

tranſactions

tranſactions of 1782, diminiſh its deliberative capacities, and preclude itſelf from conſidering, adopting, or rejecting, the meaſure thus ſuggeſted from the Throne? If ſo, the Britiſh Parliament, at that period, did more than wave its pretenſions to ſuperiority over this country: it ſurrendered a portion of its inherent powers: it cramped and circumſcribed its own internal authority; and impoſed reſtraints upon itſelf, which render it, with reſpect to Ireland, leſs free than it is in its intercourſe with any other nation in Europe, or the world.

The King too, according to this interpretation of the Settlement of 1782, muſt be conſtrued to have parted (rather inconſiſtently with the duties of his high ſtation) with an eſſential attribute and prerogative of that royal dignity, which is, as it were, the centre round which revolve the liberties of our Conſtitution; and the Iriſh Parliament muſt be aſſumed to have abdicated its ſituation, and renounced its right of conſulting and advancing the intereſts of the nation.—I heſitate to admit a conſtruction, from which ſuch conſequences flow.

The Settlement of 1782 did what? It adjuſted the controverſies which had ariſen from the claims of Britain to a right of legiſlating for this country: a right, which I have your authority (p. 5) for ſaying, this country had not acknowledged, but had denied.—The Arrangement of 1782, then, was

merely the abolition of an abuſe, and a reſtitution of the genuine principles of our eſtabliſhment. Suppoſe this abuſe had never ariſen: that Iriſh independence had never been invaded; nor the excluſive Legiſlative Competence of our Parliament diſputed, either in theory or practice; and let me aſk of any reaſonable man, whether it would be an infringement of this Independence, for Britain to propoſe (ſubjecting the offer to our rejection) a Legiſlative Union of theſe two Independent Kingdoms?—If not, can ſuch a propoſal be ſaid to violate a Compact, which has done no more (you tell us) than to ſecure and reinſtate us in that independence, of which the ſame propoſal would have been no infringement?

Has the Compact of 1782 rendered Ireland more independent of Great Britain, than this latter country has at all times been of Ireland? and would it be any invaſion of Britiſh independence, if we ſhould propoſe an Union to the Parliament of Great Britain? No reaſonable man can ſay it would; becauſe to ſubmit to the Legiſlature of a country, an offer which that Legiſlature may, at its diſcretion, accept of or reject, can never be conſtrued into the ſlighteſt encroachment on the independence of thoſe to whom it is made. Nay, ſuch an offer is not only compatible with their independence, but even with ſubordination on the part of thoſe from whom it comes; and accordingly, in the reign of Anne, before the æra of Iriſh Independence,

ence, we find the propoſal of Union coming from the Iriſh Lords.

Now, can it be ſaid that a propoſal, coming from the Britiſh to the Iriſh Parliament, is a violation of the independence of this country, or of the compact by which that independence has been recogniſed,—when the ſame propoſal, moving from Ireland to Great Britain, could never, by any caſuiſtry, be conſtrued into the ſlighteſt encroachment on the at leaſt equally undiſputed independence of that country?

France or Spain are ſurely as independent of Great Britain, as this iſland can pretend to be; yet I will be bold to ſay, that in propoſing a Legiſlative Union with either of thoſe States, though England might be guilty of groſs extravagance and abſurdity, ſhe could not be taxed with impeaching their independence: why then ſhould ſhe be accuſed of infringing ours, or of violating that compact by which it has been ſecured, on the ground of having offered that, which ſhe might offer to any State in Europe, without incurring the charge of having encroached upon its privileges?

But I am, for argument, ſuppoſing a caſe which does not exiſt: the Engliſh Parliament has made us no propoſal.—The alleged violation of the Compact of 1782, has conſiſted in nothing more

than this,—that the King of Ireland has preſumed to recommend it to his Iriſh Parliament to conſider, and adopt, the beſt mode of conſolidating into a laſting fabric, the component parts of the Britiſh Empire! In like manner, the King of England has ventured to recommend to his Britiſh Parliament, to enter upon a ſimilar deliberation; and I have not heard that that high-ſpirited nation has interpreted this conduct of its Monarch into an infringement of that independence, which it poſſeſſes, as undoubtedly and ſecurely as Ireland can hers, by virtue of the Compact of 1782.

The propoſal of an Union has been introduced in the moſt legitimate and unobjectionable ſhape poſſible: it has been offered to the conſideration of the Britiſh and Iriſh Legiſlature, by the common Monarch of both kingdoms.

In the year 1780 we acquired a Free Trade; and in 1782 we acquired a Free Conſtitution. Our acquiſition in 1780 was not held to preclude a *Commercial* Regulation in 1785 *; and why ſhould our acquiſitions of 1782 be held to prevent a *Conſtitutional* Regulation in 1799? It was indeed indiſpenſable that the arrangements of 1785 ſhould be compatible with the freedom of trade which had been conceded five years before; and in like manner

* For no oppoſition to the Arrangement was on this ground ever made or thought of.

it is indiſpenſably requiſite (towards their validity) that any conſtitutional arrangements, hereafter made, ſhould be conſiſtent with the rights which this country acquired in 1782; and ſhould not violate the independence which we then aſſerted.

If the Britiſh Parliament had attempted, by a ſtatute paſſed in England, to bind this country to an Union, this indeed would have been to violate the Compact of 1782; but what, on the contrary, has been done?—the Recommendation from the Throne involved a manifeſt admiſſion of Excluſive Competence in the Parliament of this country to decide upon the queſtion; and the Britiſh Miniſter, in that Speech to which you ſo frequently advert, has expreſsly acknowledged the right of the Iriſh Parliament to reject the meaſure of a Legiſlative Union. Thus the propoſal, ſo far from violating the Agreement of 1782, has afforded a ſignal inſtance of adherence to that Compact, and ſolemn recognition of the Independence which it ſecured.

Let me now anticipate, in ſome degree, upon a topic which belongs to another part of my argument, by ſuppoſing that inſtead of having been merely propoſed, the meaſure of an Union had been adopted; and by inquiring whether ſuch adoption would be a violation of the Compact of 1782?

A moment's

A moment's reflection will convince my reader, that much of the reaſoning, which for another purpoſe I have had recourſe to, will prove that this meaſure would involve no ſuch violation.

For inſtance; is England leſs dependant upon Ireland, than this latter country is on her? Clearly not. Yet a Legiſlative Union would not encroach on the independence of Great Britain: then neither can it include a breach of that Compact of 1782, which its moſt zealous advocate cannot pretend to have done more, than render Ireland as independent of Britain, as Britain is of her.

But Union will diminiſh the number of Iriſh Repreſentatives. Suppoſe I ſhould conſent to deſert the abſtract queſtion, and enter upon that which, regarding the terms, is not before me, ſtill I may with truth reply to this objection,—that a repreſentation proportioned to Iriſh territory, population, reſources, and contribution, in an Union thoroughly identifying the intereſts of the two countries, will be ſufficient to ſecure to Ireland as complete a participation in the privileges of the Britiſh conſtitution, (and what more could her warmeſt friend deſire?) as is enjoyed by the inhabitants of any Engliſh county; whoſe numbers would yet (if any one were ſilly enough to compare them) be found to bear no proportion to the ſum of Britiſh repreſentation.

Again:

Again: Ireland is not, by virtue of the Compact of 1782, leſs dependant on Great Britain, than Scotland was on England before 1706. If an Union then would infringe that independence which our Compact has procured, it follows, that the Scottiſh Union involved a violation of the independence of Scotland. But no loyal ſubject, or friend to order, will flippantly impeach the juſtice or validity of a treaty, on which perhaps depends the legitimacy of the United Parliament, the authority of its ſtatutes, and even the title of His Majeſty to his Scottiſh Crown *.

By the Union, the number of Scotch Repreſentatives was abridged; and I ſhall no otherwiſe anſwer the epithets which you laviſh on an analogous ſyſtem, when you deſcribe Iriſh Union as "a deſtructive and accurſed meaſure," "a ſurrender and annihilation of our Conſtitution,"—than by ſuggeſting to you the ſubverſive conſequences which lurk behind a doctrine, that may taint the Acts of the Britiſh Legiſlature for near a century; abſolve Scotland from its allegiance; and impeach the title of the reigning family to the throne of that realm; or which at beſt will leave this great imperial Arrangement to depend for its ſtability on the frail baſis of acquieſcence, and of an inſufficient and ſhort-lived preſcription, which we can trace

* Secured to the Houſe of Hanover by an article of the Union.

to

to have commenced in an unjuſt encroachment on the rights and privileges of an independent nation.

The meaſure of Union can no otherwiſe violate that Compact, on which you ſo much rely, than by trenching on the independence which it guaranteed; and if ſuch would be its operation in the caſe of Ireland, ſuch muſt it have been in the caſe of equally independent Scotland. As invectives are not arguments, (elſe a ſpeech would be logical, in proportion as it was abuſive,) I am ſure you have too much ſenſe and candour, to expect that I ſhould give a farther anſwer to thoſe epithets which you have laviſhed on the meaſure of a Legiſlative Union. You do not require to be informed, that if Union were indeed the annihilation of our Conſtitution, the many virtuous and enlightened men who are friendly to it, would become zealous converts to your opinion: but thoſe perſons hold Union to include no ſuch ſurrender; and if their judgment be erroneous, yet they are to be refuted by argument, and not frightened out of their ſentiments by mere vehement aſſertion. Let me cloſe this part of my argument, by ſelecting a few paſſages from the numerous extracts, which you have incorporated into your Speech; and by ſubjoining a remark as to the concluſiveneſs of ſuch documents.

The firſt paſſage which I ſhall tranſcribe, is extracted by you (p. 7) from an Addreſs to His Majeſty, voted by the Houſe of Commons, on the 16th of April 1782, and is as follows: "The "Crown of Ireland is inſeparably annexed to the "Crown of Great Britain; on which connexion "the intereſts and happineſs of both nations de- "pend; *but the kingdom of Ireland is a diſtinct king- "dom, with a Parliament of her own, the ſole legiſ- "lature thereof.*"

Upon this latter ſentence you ſeem to place ſome reliance; but, as it ſtrikes me, without the leaſt foundation. It is manifeſt, to any perſon who reads the paſſage, and has even a general notion of the tranſactions of that period, that thoſe who penned the Addreſs had no intention of inſiſting on the diſtinctneſs of this kingdom, or contraſting it with the ſituation which Union would produce; but merely meant to urge this diſtinctneſs, as an argument againſt the abuſe of which they complained; and to inſinuate the injuſtice of their being bound by the acts of a Parliament *in which they were not repreſented:* and that this is the true interpretation of the paſſage is ſo clear, from even what I have already quoted, that it is almoſt ſuperfluous to ſupport it by tranſcribing the next ſentence, which, however, is as follows: "there "is no body of men competent to make laws to "bind this nation, except the King, Lords, and "Commons of Ireland; nor any other Parliament,

" which hath any authority in this country, ſave " only the Parliament of Ireland."

The next paſſages which I ſhall tranſcribe, are extracted from an Addreſs of the Houſe of Commons to the Duke of Portland, and from the ſpeech with which his Grace concluded the Seſſion, and occur in pages 14 and 15 of your Speech.

" We" (ſay the Houſe of Commons) " ſhall " have ſeen this great national arrangement eſta- " bliſhed on a baſis which ſecures the tranquillity " of Ireland, and unites the affections as well as " intereſts of both kingdoms."

" Convince the people" (ſays the Lord Lieutenant) " in your ſeveral diſtricts, that the two " kingdoms are now one; indiſſolubly connected " in unity of conſtitution, and unity of intereſts."

Upon theſe paſſages I would remark, that the language which they hold was encouraging and uſeful; calculated to promote harmony between the two countries, and produce that laſting cordiality which it proclaimed. But with all due reſpect for the ſpeech of a Viceroy (which yet the conſtitution recogniſes as the ſpeech of the Miniſter), and all proper deference for the Addreſs of a Houſe of Commons, I would obſerve, that both the Viceroy and the Commons, when they travel out of facts, and expatiate in conjectures, riſk falling into

into thoſe errors from which no human creature is exempt. There is but one Potentate, that I know of, whō claims to be infallible, and his claim, the tenets of my religion do not oblige me to admit. But, if I be not bound to acquieſce implicitly in all the obiter opinions, which are promulged by a Viceroy, or a Houſe of Commons,—ſtill leſs am I obliged to ſwallow their predictions. When they turn prophets, I feel myſelf warranted to doubt their inſpiration; though, in the preſent inſtance, I chooſe to ſhift from myſelf, on the Societies of United Iriſhmen, and hordes of Iriſh traitors, the diſreſpectful taſk of collating certain events and doctrines which we have lately witneſſed, with thoſe predictions which foretold the permanent tranquillity of Ireland, the mutual affection of the Sifter Countries, and their indiſſoluble connexion, as the inevitable conſequences of the Arrangement of 1782.

The next (and laſt) reference, which I ſhall rather digreſs from the train of my argument to notice, is that which you make to the modification of Poynings' law, and which will be found in p. 24 of your Speech. That ſtatute, you ſay, "enacts that no bill ſhall paſs into a law in Ire-"land, unleſs it be returned under the Great Seal "of Great Britain."

This proviſion you ſtate with a triumph which I cannot underſtand. To me it ſeems to involve a

ſignal acknowledgment of the frailty of that bond by which theſe countries are connected; and to apply a weak and inadequate remedy to the evil which it admits. What is the cure which it adminiſters? Forſooth, the reſponſibility of an individual to the Parliament of Great Britain. This wonderful noſtrum is to remove all the ſeparating tendencies, and acrimonies, and eruptions, which may ariſe from the nature of our preſent connexion, and announce the cachexy of our imperial conſtitution.—No: I advert to the defect which this proviſion announces, and place little reliance on the cure which it provides. I conſider the law as an argument for a Legiſlative Union, inaſmuch as I do not eſtimate the vigour of a man by the number of his crutches, or the ſtability of a houſe by the number of its props.

Having now finiſhed my examination of thoſe documents to which you refer, I return from that ſhort digreſſion which, in noticing the laſt of them, I have made; and cloſe the anſwer which I have endeavoured to give to this part of your argument, by admitting, in the very language which you have choſen to adopt, "that the Adjuſtment of 1782 "was final: that by it the Conſtitution of Ireland "was fully and perfectly eſtabliſhed; and that no "conſtitutional queſtion can exiſt to interrupt the "harmony of the two countries *."

* Page 31, 32.

But,

But, as the adoption of Union by an Iriſh Parliament, independent and uncontrolled, would not unſettle that final Adjuſtment, which did no more than aſſert the independence of that Parliament,—as the mode in which the meaſure of Union has been introduced, ſo far from aſſailing that "full "and perfect eſtabliſhment" of our independence, which was ſecured to us in 1782, has, on the contrary, at the riſk of loſing this great meaſure, moſt ſolemnly and explicitly recogniſed that independence,—as Union is no "conſtitutional queſtion," but an imperial arrangement *ſubmitted* to the wiſdom of our Parliament, and which that Parliament is competent to reject,—and above all, as I acquieſce in the propoſition contained in His Majeſty's anſwer to an Addreſs in 1782, that "the conſtitu-"tional connexion between Great Britain and "Ireland is eſſential to the intereſts and happineſs of "both nations *,"—I am, for theſe reaſons, unable to diſcover how that poſition on which you ſo rely, that the Adjuſtment of 1782 was final—is at all material to the preſent queſtion; and I am ready to adopt a meaſure, which, without repealing that recognition of the independence of Ireland, ſeems calculated to give ſtability to its connexion with Great Britain.

In denying the Settlement of 1782 to have been final, it ſeems that Mr. Pitt meant to aſſert no

* Page 13.

more

more than I do.—He could not mean to deny, that that arrangement put a final period to all Britiſh claims of legiſlating for this country, and all doubts reſpecting Iriſh independence. That he did not intend to diſpute this, he has very unequivocally proved, by an explicit admiſſion of the independence of our Parliament, and its competence to reject the meaſure which was ſubmitted to its conſideration.—He ſeems merely to have deprecated a perverſion of this truth, to the purpoſes of falſehood; and, while he admitted that the Compact of 1782 was a final ſettlement of all controverſies, to have denied *that it was a final abolition of the inherent powers of Parliament:* that it extinguiſhed or abridged the deliberative or (internally) legiſlative capacities of either Legiſlature; or debarred the Iriſh Parliament from the unalienable right of employing the ſupreme authority of the State, towards attaining the permanent welfare of the Empire.—This, I apprehend, was all that he denied; and heartily do I concur in the denial: deliberately do I record my diſſent from thoſe, who pronounce that, in accompliſhing an Union, the Britiſh or Iriſh Parliament would violate the final Settlement of 1782.

I might not ſtate accurately (as I have not the printed copy before me), and therefore I do not attempt to ſtate at all, the ſpeech of the Britiſh Miniſter: I merely ſuggeſt, that he appears to have made no aſſertion, *ſubſtantially* different from mine,

mine, upon this queſtion. The immenſe ſuperiority of his talents and political knowledge over mine, may have prevented him from treating the ſubject as I have done. He, for inſtance, may have dwelt on the preſumption which ariſes from what paſſed in the Britiſh Parliament on the 17th of May 1782, that ſome further meaſures of conſtitution were then in the contemplation of the Britiſh Legiſlature *."

" The fact," you tell us, " *ſeems* to be, that the " reſolution in reſpect to future meaſures had com- " merce only in view †."

In the above paſſage you appear to admit ſome further arrangements to have been in contemplation; which, whether they were commercial, you can but conjecture, and we may be allowed to doubt. But ſuppoſe they were—ſtill the fact ſupplies this inference, that the Compact of 1782 did not preclude the Parliaments of theſe countries from keeping up a friendly and federative intercourſe, and entering into ſuch new compacts as circumſtances might require. And why not into political as well as commercial compacts? The Agreement of 1782 had decided a point in iſſue: it had put an end to controverſy, not to intercourſe, between the countries; and they ſtill, compatibly with the ſpirit of that contract, were at liberty to

* Page 19. † Page 21.

enter

enter on any new treaty, political or commercial, provided, in concluding or abandoning it, the Iriſh Parliament was allowed to exerciſe as uncontrolled a diſcretion as the Britiſh; and, in ſhort, provided the baſis of the tranſaction was an acknowledgment of that independence which we eſtabliſhed in 1782. But the Addreſs of the Iriſh Commons to His Majeſty at that period, having (with truth) denied that "any other Parliament hath au-"thority in this country, ſave only the Parliament "of Ireland *," therefore a Legiſlative Union would diſturb the Settlement of 1782!—I deny the concluſion. It is only one of the numerous forms, in which the unproved and untenable aſſertion appears, that, after Union, the ſupreme authority would not continue veſted in the Parliament of Ireland; and can have no influence on any minds but thoſe which confound Diſtinctneſs with Independence, and Union with Subordination. After Union, the power of legiſlating for this country would ſtill remain veſted in the Parliament of Ireland, if, at this day, the Parliament of England be that of Yorkſhire, or the Parliament of Ireland be that of Dublin; and if the contraſt between the number of Iriſh and Britiſh Repreſentatives in the United Parliament were leſs ſilly and deluſive than I contend it is, ſtill, of the inferiority on the part of Ireland I might ſay, as on another

* This anſwer will alſo apply to p. 8, where the ſame reaſoning is inſinuated in the following paſſage:—"While Ireland re-"tains a Parliament, ſhe has the means of redreſs."

occaſion you have done, that "if it created a *theo-*
"*retic* difference in the conſtitution of the two
"kingdoms, which renders ours inferior, it is one
"not injurious to us, but neceſſary from our ſitua-
"tion in the Empire, and which ſecures Union
"and Connexion on a firm and laſting baſis *."—
With far more juſtice may this language be appro-
priated to the meaſure which I am ſupporting, than
to the more invidious, yet leſs effectual one to
which you apply it.

Union would proportion Iriſh legiſlative weight
to the importance of this country in point of ter-
ritory, &c. and thus that inferiority (which, when
our intereſts were identified, muſt beſides be un-
injurious) would be one ariſing from our phyſical
ſituation, and derived rather from the law of na-
ture than of convention; but the modification of
Poynings' Law, which you extol † for having
put one of the co-ordinate eſtates of the *Independent*
Iriſh Parliament in abſolute *dependance* on the Bri-
tiſh Legiſlature—this ſtatute, I ſay, without which
you admit that the boaſted Arrangement of 1782
would have been imperfect ‡, lamely and incom-
pletely achieves its purpoſe of ſtrengthening the
connexion, by delivering Iriſh Independence
into the guardianſhip of a Britiſh Miniſter, and
thus proportioning our inferiority, not to our re-
lative natural ſituation, but to the poſſible caprice,

* P. 24. † P. 24 and 25. ‡ P. 24.

or ignorance, or wickedneſs, or uſurping policy of an individual, or a Cabinet.—I will admit, what it might be diſreſpectful to aſſert, that the Arrangement of 1782 was imperfect (and if ſo, its deficiencies were ill ſupplied by the ſtatute which I have juſt noticed); but it, in my opinion, laid a glorious foundation for that meaſure, which I ſtill conceive to be neceſſary, towards permanently conſolidating the ſtrength and intereſts of the Empire: it raiſed us from that ſubſervient ſituation in which England might have dictated to us the terms of Union; and by reſtoring or aſſerting the Independence of this country, it enabled us to treat on equal terms, and to dictate, in our turn, the only Union we would accept. I will not diſparage that Settlement which fixed the conſtitution of this kingdom, by, on the one hand, forgetting that it has raiſed us to a ſituation from whence we can treat ſecurely and advantageouſly with the Siſter Country; or, on the other hand, by inſiſting that it has paralyſed our Parliament, and precluded them from directing thoſe powers which a Supreme Legiſlature muſt poſſeſs, towards accompliſhing what they deem conducive to the proſperity of the Iriſh People.

But, "if the work of 1782 was incomplete, why "were not the meaſures followed up to their com-"pletion *?" Why was not an Union then accompliſhed? Many cauſes may have prevented it. Per-

* P. 28.

haps

haps this was not preciſely the further meaſure, which was in the contemplation of the Miniſtry of that day: perhaps the prejudices, or, if you pleaſe, the temper of the Iriſh people, were not then ſuch as to promiſe a cordial reception of the meaſure: to have offered Union, when we demanded Independence, might have ſeemed a ſort of jealous compromiſe, and brought a ſuſpicion upon the project, as if it were ſomething leſs valuable than what our Parliament had aſked. In the excited ſtate of the Iriſh mind, at that day, it might have been impolitic to have afforded them even a leſs pretext for jealouſy and diſcontent: nay, the cooleſt Iriſh patriotiſm, if an Union had been then propoſed, might have plauſibly, at leaſt, objected to the incorporation of the countries, under the relative circumſtances in which they ſtood; might have demanded a recognition of Iriſh independence, as a preliminary ſecurity for our obtaining Union on beneficial and honourable terms, and meantime required a trial of the effects of this independence, as a reaſonable experiment, and one gratifying to the feelings of a proud and generous people. If any evils have ariſen from independence, yet, before it had exiſtence, they could not be felt, and might not be foreſeen. The trial, however, has now been fully made. It is ſince 1782 that the Commercial Propoſitions have been refuſed, that the tranſaction of the Regency has taken place, and that bills for Parliamentary Reform have *fortunately* been rejected, which, if they had

paſſed, as they might have done, would have ſapped the connexion, by deſtroying the ſimilitude of the imperial Parliaments, and giving Ireland a Legiſlature differently conſtituted from that of Britain. It is ſince 1782 that France has become a monſter, devaſtating Europe, and manifeſting ſuch diſtinguiſhed hoſtility to Britain, as calls upon us to conſolidate the defenſive force of that empire, of which, you admit, we form "a conſtituent and "inſeparable part *." It is within the ſame interval, that, under French auſpices, Separatiſm has flouriſhed ſo formidably in this country, and ripened to a Rebellion, of which (ſpite of the "perpetual pledge of amity †," by which we were pronounced to have been "indiſſolubly connected ‡," in 1782) the object was not to ſtrengthen our connexion with Great Britain. It is ſince 1782 that religious diſcord has aſſumed a character of ſo much animoſity, as to ſuggeſt, that whilſt, on the one hand, it may, in our preſent ſituation, be dangerous to grant, it may, on the other hand (if a divided people is an evil) be impolitic to withhold.

Theſe ſeveral facts and circumſtances, and the reflections which they ſupply, may have furniſhed many arguments for an Union, which did not offer themſelves in 1782; and, by reducing theory to practice, may have conſiderably ſtrengthened thoſe reaſons which exiſted even then: in ſhort, there are a thouſand obvious cauſes which may have pre-

* P. 26. † P. 31. ‡ P. 33.

vented

vented the accompliſhment of an Union at that period, and which it would be nearly as little difficult as it would be material to enumerate. And if, after all, the meaſure has been too long delayed, does it follow that it ought in prudence to be finally abandoned? and this at a moment when the events paſſing in the world demonſtrate its expedience, emphatically and clearly; and even render it doubtful whether Union ought not to be adopted on terms leſs advantageous than it is in our power to enſure? In vain do you aſk, "what "reliance we can place on the Britiſh Miniſter's "adherence to any compact, on which he might "reſt his projected Union, if he has already vio-"lated a compact ſolemnly made and ratified*?" Your queſtion aſſumes that the Agreement of 1782 has been infringed; a poſition which I have denied, and, as I hope, diſproved. But this renowned Adjuſtment (which you are miſtaken in ſuppoſing that Union will diſturb) has ſhowered "down "upon us, bleſſings, trade, and affluence†," almoſt incalculable. After having begged to except from this liſt of bleſſings, the internal diſcord—the attempts at ſeparation—the deep-laid conſpiracies—the rebellion and invaſion which we have witneſſed, and are ſtill witneſſing, and which have all occurred ſince 1782—I would expreſs my doubt whether theſe advances in commercial proſperity are fairly attributable to the Adjuſtment in queſtion. Without the aid of any adjuſtment, if we believe

* P. 33. † P. 34.

Roſe

Roſe and Chalmers (nay, if we do not ſhut our eyes on an obtruſive truth), Great Britain has in the ſame interval made advances as enormouſly exceeding thoſe which ſhe had made in former periods. We cannot impute theſe to any thing that paſſed in 1782. Why then ſhould we trace the accelerated progreſs of Iriſh proſperity to the conſtitutional occurrences of that period? events, from which might have been more naturally expected that domeſtic content and tranquillity which they have utterly failed to produce! Why may we not rather attribute ſuch rapid ſtrides to affluence, to thoſe cauſes, whatever they be, which have aggrandized Great Britain, and conſider them as our portion of the common benefits of imperial greatneſs, and as a motive for ſtrengthening that connexion from whence they have flowed? from our free trade *, they may indeed be in a great degree derivable; but that freedom will not be abridged by Union, and was not acquired in 1782.

I have already proteſted againſt being held to any more ſtrict arrangement than a mere regular purſuit of your reaſoning will ſupply:—I am anſwering your argument, and cannot, if I wiſhed it, be more ſyſtematic than you are; unleſs I deviate from that courſe which you have preſcribed, and to which it is my buſineſs to adhere. Therefore having followed you in your inveſtigation of the Ad-

* Granted by the Britiſh Parliament.

juſtment of 1782, having digreſſed *with you* from the tranſactions of that period, and *with you* recurred to them again, I now accompany you to the diſcuſſions of 1785.

The Duke of Rutland, at the opening of the Seſſion, recommends "to the earneſt inveſtigation" of Parliament "thoſe objects of trade and commerce between Great Britain and Ireland," (you ſay, "mark the expreſſion,") "*which had not yet* "*received their complete adjuſtment* *."—The meaning of theſe expreſſions is ſufficiently apparent; they were made uſe of on the ſubject of *commerce* merely, and involve no more than the aſſertion which you yourſelf make, that from 1782 "no advance was made as to commerce in general, except what was done by Yelverton's Bill †;" the inadequacy of which you had ſhown in page 30, and alſo ſhowed by your ſupport of the Commercial Arrangement in 1785. And you muſt allow me to take *this occaſion* of acquieſcing in the truth of your poſition, in page 45, that "to ſelect general expreſſions made uſe of on the ſubject of "Commerce, and apply them to the ſubject of Conſtitution, ſhows no great candour in reaſoning." This doctrine of yours alſo applies to the obſervation which you make on another part of the Duke of Rutland's Speech, in which he ſtates a "common intereſt in treaties with foreign States, as "forming a bond of mutual connexion ‡." This

* P. 16. † P. 35. ‡ P. 37.

paſſage

paſſage you contraſt with Lord Caſtlereagh's opinion (in which I moſt heartily acquieſce), that the conſideration of the federative relations of the Britiſh Empire with foreign States, furniſhes ſtrong inducements to a Union. You forget that the Duke ſpoke merely of commercial treaties; and that (as you very properly remark) "to ſelect expreſſions made uſe of on one ſubject and apply "them to another, ſhows no great candour in reaſoning."

With reſpect to your own conduct at this laſt-mentioned period, far be it from me to make, what, after all, might be an unſucceſsful attempt,—in demonſtrating your inconſiſtency,—to detect ſpots in the political character of a man ſo ſuperior to myſelf. In ſhortly contraſting your paſt and preſent conduct, my object is only to tempt you to reviſe the latter; or, if I cannot accompliſh this, then to leſſen the weight of your authority againſt me, by balancing one opinion of yours againſt the other.

You admit yourſelf to have ſaid, in 1785, "That "things could not remain as they were: that com-"mercial jealouſy was rouſed, and would increaſe "with two independent Legiſlatures, if theſe did "not mutually declare the principles whereby their "powers ſhould be ſeparately employed in direct-"ing the common concerns of trade; and that, "without this united intereſt of commerce, poli-"tical Union would receive many ſhocks, and ſe-

"paration

"paration of intereſt muſt threaten ſeparation of "connexion *." In vain, Sir, would you dilute the ſtrong effect of theſe aſſertions, and ſoften the contraſted colouring with which they relieve your preſent conduct. On what occaſion, and for what purpoſe, did you make uſe of theſe poſitions? to ſhow that the two Legiſlatures ſhould enter into a compact (for this is what was propoſed) reſpecting the mode of forming their commercial regulations. When you declared that things could not remain as they were, your meaning excluſively and evidently was, that ſuch a Compact was neceſſary to the ſecurity of the connexion: when you obſerved that the jealouſy which was rouſed, would increaſe with two independent Legiſlatures, you manifeſtly implied that this diſtinctneſs was pregnant with dangers to the connexion, which required the correction of ſome imperial compact, that, qualifying this independence, ſhould be binding upon both; and in adding that without that commercial Union, (which nothing but this compact could permanently ſecure,) the political Union would be expoſed to ſhocks which would threaten the connexion, you, in my mind, promulged a doctrine which was as true, as it is irreconcilable with your preſent opinions.

Any other interpretation than this, which I have given of the paſſages above cited, would render them impertinent to the propoſitions which you

* Page 45, 49.

employed them to ſupport. How then can you now aſſert that "things do not remain as they "were *," when you are aware that no compact has been entered into? and that the Iriſh Parliament is not bound to conform to the Britiſh laws, which may be made reſpecting certain matters of rade and navigation? or how can you deſire that things ſhould not be modified, when you admit they cannot remain as they are †? and that the ſecurity of the connexion is endangered by the want of that compact which, in conſequence of the diſtinctneſs of our Legiſlatures, has been rejected?—"The paſſing," you ſay, "of the Com-"mercial Propoſitions into a law, would have com-"pletely anſwered all the purpoſes of the preſent "project ‡" (of Union). Without acquieſcing in the rectitude of this doctrine, I may yet remark that they have not paſſed into a law, and therefore, that, even conformably to your own principle, a Union may be neceſſary.

But things, you tell us, have not remained as they were. "The evil of commercial jealouſies "acting upon the laws of two independent Legiſ-"latures, has been remedied by the good ſenſe and "mutual intereſt of each country, from time to time "paſſing all laws neceſſary to prevent the inconve-"nience of commercial jealouſies ‖." Sir, the danger is, that the exerciſe by diſtinct Legiſlatures of their undoubted privileges, may produce impe-

* P. 45. † P. 37. ‡ P. 51. ‖ P. 25.

rial

rial diſſenſion; and that the good ſenſe of the countries in having as yet prevented the miſchief from ariſing, has annihilated that riſk, which ſprings eternally and inevitably from ſuch a legiſlative organization, is a poſition which it is more neceſſary than it is eaſy to demonſtrate.

You ſeem, too, in 1785, not to have foreſeen the all-healing efficacy of this good ſenſe, when you argued ſo ſtrongly for the neceſſity of a commercial compact; nor does it afford an uninſtructive leſſon of human prejudice and inconſiſtency, to find a perſon of your diſtinguiſhed ſagacity and talents, in one place *, conſidering the Great Seal of Britain to be a better ſecurity than the good ſenſe of Ireland, for a continuance of the connexion between the two countries; and, in another place †, preferring the junction which this good ſenſe, you ſay, has formed, to the guaranty which a ſolemn compact would beſtow; though a caſuiſt might doubt whether that roll of parchment, which you ſo deſpiſe ‡, be a more frail aſſurance than the piece of wax in which you place ſuch implicit confidence. Some, I know, have puſhed this contempt of parchment farther than you do, and even extended their ſacrilegious irreverence to wax. On their arrogance, a parchment adorned with the Great Seal of England on its right ſide, and of Ireland on its left, can make no impreſſion of reſpect.

* P. 25. † P. 51. ‡ Ibid.

They

They affirm (but they are calumniators of our Conſtitution), that Iriſh independence (which they admit to be remarkably well-ſounding words) is no where to be found but in certain rolls of parchment, called 22 Geo. III. c. 53, and 23 Geo. III. c. 28; and theſe they are ſo far from reſpecting, that they quite miſtake their operation, which they conceive to have been (I was about to ſay *purely*) of a commercial nature, and to have erected an Iriſh ariſtocracy into a company, for excluſively carrying on the trade of Jobbing and of Parliament. This commerce they indeed contend to have flouriſhed under their protection, but doubt whether the proſperity of the country has advanced in proportion; whether the commodity in which they traffic (I mean connexion) was not ſecured as well to England, and leſs expenſively and gallingly to this country before their ariſtocratic monopoly had accrued; and whether, in ſhort, Britiſh aſcendancy might not, with as much advantage to both kingdoms, have remained in the keeping of an Engliſh Parliament, as been transferred to Iriſh Commiſſioners to adminiſter. Nay, they inſiſt that by the ingenuity of Britiſh Councils, this Wax and Parchment has been manufactured into a maſk, beneath which Engliſh Superiority, wearing the features of Iriſh Independence, has ranged without control, and been leſs ſuſceptible of confinement within the limits of that aſcendant, which (I ſpeak this ſeriouſly) Britain ought to poſſeſs: which belongs to our ſituation, and is neceſſary to our connexion;

nexion; ſince I hold it for a maxim, that this country muſt be united with, or ſeparate from, or in a certain degree practically dependant upon Britain.

In truth, I conceive you, Sir, in 1785, to have very ſignally recorded your concurrence in my doctrine, as to the propriety of ſuch control. I mean by the ſupport which I apprehend you gave to propoſitions that were reſiſted by Meſſrs. Flood and Grattan, on the ground of their "interfering with "the legiſlative authority of the Iriſh Parliament," violating that compact of 1782 on which you now ſo much rely, and "putting an end to the free con-"ſtitution of Ireland *." And as, in truth, that commercial ſyſtem went to bind this country, in certain caſes by the acts of a Parliament *in which ſhe was not repreſented* (by pledging her to the adoption of ſuch acts when made, and thus ſo far diveſting her of all legiſlative freedom), I am the more ſurpriſed at your conſtitutional ſcruples about a Union, which would not bind Ireland by the acts of *any Legiſlature but one in which her ariſtocracy, wealth, and population, were adequately repreſented*; and I cannot eaſily reconcile your affirmation, that not "an atom of our Conſtitution †" was ſurren-

* See Woodfall's Sketch of the Debate;—and N. B. That theſe obſervations of Meſſrs. F. and G. were applied to the *Bill* of Mr. Orde, which the then Chancellor of the Exchequer ſupported.

† P. 44.

dered

dered by the plan which you recommended in 1785, with your poſition that the ſyſtem now propoſed involves its utter annihilation. To me that meaſure ſeems ſomewhat more than merely eligible, which, by identifying, even to vulgar eyes, the intereſts of both countries, will appeaſe the factions, and promote the wealth and tranquillity of this; which, inſtead of deſtroying the ſubſtance of our eſtabliſhment, will animate its lifeleſs forms with the pure and genuine ſpirit of the Britiſh Conſtitution, and give it a vigour that ſhall ſcatter bleſſings through this too long drooping land.

But will Union produce theſe advantages to our country?—This, I admit, is the real queſtion. The intrinſic merits of the meaſure form the true matter for our diſcuſſion; to which the competence of Parliament, and the Compact of 1782, are about as pertinent as Lord Macartney's Embaſſy to China.

You aſk *, what defects, tending to Separation, the preſent ſtate of our connexion involves? For my part I diſcern enow to produce difficulty in ſelection, and tedioufneſs in enumeration. If our independence be real, I ſee a range of poſſible diſſenſions, as wide as is the ſphere of legiſlative dominion in a ſtate. I ſee that jealouſy, which will be apt to miſtake acts of animoſity for aſſertions of independence, conſpiring with a thouſand nameleſs contingencies to turn this theory into practice, to

* P. 52.

looſen

looſen the connexion, and " ſtrike the Crown " into the hazard." If our independence were merely nominal, the thing would be ſtill worſe; it might involve a dependance more galling and aggravated becauſe concealed; at all events it would be fraud, and would contaminate and render odious that connexion of which it made a part; whilſt it might expoſe our oſtenſibly independent Parliament to the diſtruſt and abhorrence of the people; might bring their moſt meritorious acts, and thoſe moſt neceſſary towards ſupporting the connexion, into ſuſpicion, and make them paſs for ſymptoms of corrupt ſervility. Again, if our Independence were, as it might be, ſomething fluctuating between reality and name—ſubſtantial on ſome occaſions, and but apparent upon others—it ſeems to me that the likely conſequence would be, its combining the miſchiefs of both ſyſtems; in any of the three caſes I diſcern in our diſtinctneſs (that is to ſay, in the theory of our preſent relation to Britain), a ſtore of weapons, whereof faction might avail itſelf to wound and ſever a connexion, ſo frail, that even a pique between two individuals, on oppoſite ſides of the channel, might give to its friends ſome reaſonable ground for trembling.

If, in our preſent imperial arrangements, there lurk theſe tendencies to diſruption, have the ſituation and views of France ſo little aided their effect, as to render it unwiſe in us to wreſt from our foe

the arms which we had inadvertently committed to his hands? Have ſeparatiſts at home looked idly at the weakneſs of our ſyſtem, or profited by that weakneſs in attempting its deſtruction? Has our populace manifeſted ſuch a contented fondneſs for the preſent eſtabliſhment, or that celebrated Compact of 1782 which ſecured it, as that we need entertain fears of modifying it, leſt we might thereby damp the *loyalty* evinced by our liege pikemen at Roſs or Vinegar Hill?

The hiſtory of (would I could ſay the late) Rebellion—the deſcents upon our coaſts—the fatigues of our yeomanry—the ſtern, though neceſſary, proviſions of our Legiſlature—the ſcenes of ſcourging in our metropolis—the multitude of our troops, with all the train of conſoling details, which attend on civil diſcord and diſaffection, accompanied with the comments of the empty, arrogant, and applauded Tone—will ſupply anſwers to ſome of the inquiries which I have made, and ſuggeſt whether the defects of our ſyſtem be practical or merely theoretic.

But you, Sir, "can find only two defects even "ſuggeſted; the one of peace and war, including "treaties; the other of a Regency *."

As to the firſt, you ſay, that as the two kingdoms may happen to diſſent from each other, ſo a diſ-

* P. 52.

agree-

agreement between two Houſes of Parliament may take place; and therefore the argument which proves the expediency of conſolidating the kingdoms, would go to recommend a conſolidation of the two Houſes of Parliament; *quod eſt abſurdum.*

This reaſoning appears liable to ſome ſtrong objections, which I ſhall take the liberty of offering without much order, ſuggeſting them as they occur.

Firſt. One Empire with two Legiſlatures is ſomewhat analogous to the idea of one man with two wills; and is, indeed, little ſhort of a contradiction in terms: therefore, that the legiſlative powers of an empire ſhould not be ſcattered but concentrated, is at leaſt deſirable, if not eſſential, to conſtituting and giving exiſtence to the Empire.

But one Legiſlature, conſiſting of diſtinct branches, is perfectly intelligible in point of theory, and highly beneficial in point of practice.

Therefore, legiſlatively to blend two kingdoms, if they be parts of one Empire, would be to remove an inconſiſtency, and obtain a good; whereas, to conſolidate two branches of the Legiſlature would be to produce a miſchief, and this without the pretext of having had any anomaly to remove.

The Britiſh Legiſlature is divided into diſtinct branches, becauſe the community, which it repreſents,

ſents, is ſplit into different intereſts; but the kingdoms of the Britiſh Empire have but one intereſt, if properly underſtood; and therefore the neceſſity for diviſion does not exiſt.

It contributes to conſtitutional freedom to have the branches of a Legiſlature diſtinct: it contributes to imperial energy to have the Legiſlative of the empire conſolidated, not diſperſed.

If two Houſes of Parliament diſagree, the effect is, that the meaſure falls to the ground; and in matters of internal regulation this may happen without ill conſequence; but how languid will the Empire be, if in great imperial concerns it muſt remain inactive, paralyſed by the diſagreement of its two Legiſlatures!

Why are the Houſes of the Britiſh Legiſlature kept diſtinct? In order to give them an opportunity of diſagreeing with effect: in order to give efficacy and operation to their diſagreement; and make each of the branches a check upon the other.

When you preſcribe * ſeparate Legiſlatures for the Britiſh Empire, is it with a view to give efficacy to their diſſenſions? *If it be not*, you cannot ſupport your meaſure on the theory on which the conſtruction of the Britiſh Parliament is founded; *if*

* P. 59.

it

it be, you do not much conſult either the tranquillity or vigour of the Empire.

The Britiſh ſyſtem of legiſlative balance is compounded of three parts, and involves in it a principle as well of Union, as of Separation. It poſſeſſes, in the Royal Eſtate, a guide to the deliberations of the other two, and middle term, which connects and conſolidates them into one Parliament. But in your imperial ſyſtem I perceive the ſeeds of nothing but wrangle and repulſion. It is compoſed of but two eſtates. It provides amply for diſſenſion, but nothing for harmony.

His Majeſty has, indeed, at the opening of the preſent Seſſion, in his Speech to both Legiſlatures, leſs remembered their diſtinctneſs, than that they formed a great council of the Empire. But you condemn the Miniſter who adviſed this Speech; you applaud the Iriſh Houſe of Commons, which declined the royal guidance to deliberation, and inveigh againſt the preſumption of the Britiſh Legiſlature, in having paid more attention to the recommendation of the Crown.

One word more on this ſubject, and I have done.

You ſay that "Theory ſays the two Houſes of "Legiſlature may diſagree; and that theory *only* "ſays the ſame of the ſeparate Parliaments of the "two kingdoms."

 I anſwer,

I anſwer, that if theory had (which it has not, or they would not have been ſo divided) affirmed, that the Houſes of Parliament might miſchievouſly diſagree, it would have been amply and repeatedly refuted by practice; whereas, if the ſame theory had denied that the independent Parliaments of the Empire might moſt importantly and alarmingly diſſent, the annals of 1785 and 1789 would be ſufficient to contradict them. Nay, the hiſtory of the latter year might render it doubtful whether you were warranted in pronouncing* that it was "*unneceſſary to ſhow that, by law, the Executive is, "and ever muſt be, the ſame, and with the ſame con-"ſtitutional powers in each kingdom.*"—Powers limited and unlimited ſeem not to be the ſame; and therefore the Addreſs of both Houſes of the Iriſh Parliament in 1789, appears to me to have given us an Executive, with different conſtitutional powers from thoſe which were likely to be conferred in England. I ſay from thoſe which were likely to be conferred in England; for the Britiſh Parliament had not as yet appointed any Regent, and therefore by our promptitude, we riſked having an Executive different as well in perſon as in powers. The Regency Bill, which was lately introduced, and in ſupport of which you made the Speech which has produced my preſent Letter, admits that upon that memorable occaſion, the diſtinctneſs of our imperial Legiſlatures did not obviouſly contribute to the ſtability of our imperial connexion.

* P. 52.

That

That (not declaratory but enacting) Bill has, however, made many other inadvertent admiſſions, beſides the deliberate one which I have noticed: for having no otherwiſe eſcaped from one claſs of valid objections, than by expoſing itſelf to others of equal force,—in its text and its annotations*, its proviſions and its rejection, it reluctantly admitted, that the evil which it had recogniſed, it could not cure; and that none but an empiric would attempt purifying an acrimonious habit, by clapping a plaiſter of baſilicon to the eruption.

But, ſuppoſing the preſent ſtate of our connexion to be defective, you doubt whether the defect be more than theoretic, and reprobate Union, as a remedy worſe than the diſeaſe. You illuſtrate the queſtion, by the caſe of juries from the vicinage †. —I have too ſincere a reſpect for ancient eſtabliſhments, to attempt impeaching this legal proviſion with reſpect to juries. But having got on what may, perhaps, be truly called the dunghill of my profeſſion, let me ſuggeſt to you that the wiſdom and liberality of latter times, guided probably by experience, has greatly detracted from the force of your illuſtration. The ſtatute (of Anne, I believe,) which, inſtead of packing juries from the ward, directed them to be ſummoned from the body of

* The clauſes which had been ſtruck out in Committee, were printed in the form of Notes to the Bill, and were as much at variance with the clauſes which had been let to ſtand, as theſe latter were inconſiſtent amongſt themſelves.

† P. 56.

the

the county at large, gave a moſt chriſtian-like enlargement to the culprit, or ſuitor's neighbourhood; and reſembled (ſo far as the analogy which you have choſen is juſt,) referring the ſuits of the Iriſh people to the tribunal of an imperial Parliament.

Beſides, the law contemplates and corrects thoſe "prejudices, animoſities, and friendſhips," which you notice, and to which you ſuppoſe it blind. Where there is reaſon to ſuſpect that a fair trial cannot be had in the vicinage (though that vicinage embraces the whole of a county), the courts, to prevent injuſtice, will change the venue. But prejudices, alas! will extend themſelves from counties to provinces, and may taint an entire kingdom at the laſt! And if a ſuitor people ſhould diſtruſt the impartiality of the grand inqueſt, how aſſure them, but in changing the venue, by an Union? But "local knowledge is the very eſſence "of a jury's capacity to adminiſter its functions *." Be it ſo; will not Ireland return a pannel to the United Parliament? Is a jury of the county of Louth leſs qualified to perform its functions, ſitting in Dublin, than if it ſat in the town of Drogheda? And may not the imperial Parliament combine poſſeſſion of local knowledge, with exemption from local prejudice? Or will you complain that, on this grand inqueſt of the Empire, the repreſentatives of its Britiſh, as well as of its Iriſh diſtrict, claim to ſit?

* P. 57.

But the Britiſh Miniſter's object in preſſing a Union is taxation * ! The grant of eight millions, which has been made this year, and which you notice, might alone be ſufficient to refute your imputation. But ſuppoſe it were not; the man who after having obſerved, even curſorily, our hiſtory for ſome years back, after having glanced his eye upon the preſent ſtate of Ireland, and the world, and looked as far into our future (civil and religious) proſpects as he dares, can ſee no motive, but a pecuniary one, for deſiring a Legiſlative Union, and aſſign no views but of finance and taxes, to the Miniſter who propoſes it, muſt have a mind very differently conſtituted from mine. Blind and weak that Miniſter muſt be, who, in a period like the preſent, does not aim at rendering the ſubject ſatisfied and happy; who does not prefer poſſeſſing the hearts, to graſping the purſes of the people; who does not perceive that, conſidering the ſpirit of inſubordination which has gone abroad, and the jealous keenneſs, with which even flaws in government are marked, ruling powers ought, if it were but from mere policy, to purſue meaſures of conciliation, liberality, and juſtice: that before they aim at rendering their ſyſtem profitable, they ſhould take care that it is ſecure, and not, like Archimedes, be making calculations when an enemy is at their doors. It is a libel on Mr. Pitt, to ſay that the purſe of the nation is his object.

* P. 58.

It

It is not he that has taxed the Empire: it is the Directory of France. It is he that has contrived to lighten the burden while he impoſed it, and to ſpread and ſtrengthen the commercial baſis by which it was to be ſuſtained. Under his auſpices it is, that perpetual drains have been turned into mere temporary annuities; and public credit has been upheld by a mode as ſimple as efficacious: that Great Britain has been at once diminiſhing her debts, and adding to her reſources; and this in a degree ſo rapid and immenſe, that the incumbrances which ſhe is paying off ſhe might diſregard; and that her impoſts are become little elſe than a ſort of import duty on her wealth. But the Miniſter, you ſay *, will not be contented with our purſe: he is alſo deſirous to deprive us of our trade. Theſe charges appear to me to be ſtrangely incompatible with each other. It is as if a parſon ſhould wiſh to ſpoil the crop from which he was to receive his tithe; or a landlord to lay waſte the farm out of which he was to be paid his rent. It ſeems to me, therefore, that you muſt elect between the imputations which you would caſt on Mr. Pitt; and cannot bring more than an alternative charge againſt him. I will ſuppoſe that you have aſſigned him, as his motive, the deſire of getting the national purſe into his poſſeſſion. Is it not likely then that he declares no more than his real opinion, when he repreſents an

* P. 59.

Union

Union as tending to ſecure and advance our proſperity? Is an empty purſe the mighty object of his financial ambition? Could he have the cruelty to forbid our putting a few pieces into the coffer, of which he held the key himſelf? Or would he preſer poſſeſſing all its emptineſs at Weſtminſter, to leaving it here in our cuſtody well ſupplied,—with the privilege of thruſting his hand into it from time to time?

From this diſcuſſion of Mr. Pitt's motives, you return * to the queſtion of Regency; and it being my buſineſs to attend you in your arguments, I make no excuſe for digreſſing with you to this ſubject.

You ſay that, upon that occaſion, the difference between the two countries, which you admit to have been "unfortunate †," and which aroſe from the diſtinctneſs of the imperial Legiſlatures, regarded not the perſon of the Regent, but merely the limitation of his power. Though this were ſo, ſuch diſparity of prerogative would, in effect, have impaired a principle of our Conſtitution, and given the countries two Executives inſtead of one. But you ſeem to me to abridge the true extent of the difference which took place between the Parliaments at that period. You forget not only that the coincidence with reſpect to perſon

* P. 60. † P. 59.

was accidental, and therefore cannot be relied on as proof of conformity between the Legiſlatures, but that, in fact, no Regent was ever appointed for Great Britain. His Majeſty's recovery interrupted the Britiſh proceedings in their progreſs; and however bordering upon ſtrict certainty our conjectures may be, and are, that the Heir Apparent would have been the perſon nominated, this will not leſſen the truth or relevancy of my aſſertion, that the Iriſh Parliament named a Regent, before one had been named in Britain; and conferred that authority unlimited, which the Engliſh Parliament was reſtricting; and that in doing ſo they riſked having an Executive different in perſon, and more than riſked having one different in reſpect to powers. But they were not (you ſay) the Parliaments, they were only the *two* truncated Eſtates that differed on that occaſion *. In truth, the Act of annexation has *(by an Union)* ſecured the harmony of the *third*; and ſo long as that ſtatute ſhall prevail, I anſwer for the perpetual amity of the King of Ireland and Great Britain.

But the proceedings of our two Eſtates, you think, at that time, were of no avail; for "notwithſtanding what paſſed in 1789, the Act of "annexation extending to the caſe of a Regent, "and the law of 1782, about the Great Seal, "having beſides put the matter out of doubt,

* P. 59.

"there

" there does no real difficulty exiſt; and the Re-
" gent of Britain can alone repreſent the third
" Eſtate of the Iriſh Legiſlature *."

But ſpite of the efficacy of your argument to ſhow the impropriety of what took place in 1789, and ſpite of my reſpect for the waxen dignity of that idol, which was ſet up in 1782, to guard the connexion between the countries, I ſhould tremble to ſee that connexion await the iſſue of a combat, in which two branches of the Iriſh Legiſlature, unchecked and uncontradicted by any third Eſtate, were in array on one ſide, and a piece of wax oppoſed to their deciſion on the other. Nor does it ſeem that we differ in ſentiment on this point; for although you pronounce the caſe to be " free from all difficulty and doubt," yet, in order to

——" make aſſurance double ſure,
" And take a bond of Fate,"

you ſupport, not a declaratory, but enacting Bill, which purports to remove thoſe doubts, of which you have denied the exiſtence; or rather, (to ſtate the operation of that Bill more truly) which, agreeing with you that this was not a caſe of doubt, diſtinctly contradicts your opinion on paſt law, and denies, that without the proviſions of this Act, the Britiſh Regent is *ipſo facto* the Iriſh third Eſtate.

* P. 60.

Be this as it may, however, I concur with you in the expediency of preventing the repetition of ſuch diſſenſions. We do but differ in the means, which we deem calculated to attain this end. In the tranſaction of 1789, I ſee no more than a ſingle conſequence of the diſtinctneſs of our Legiſlatures; a cauſe adequate to the production of many miſchiefs beſide. Whilſt you, therefore, are content with plucking off the fruit, I am rather for eradicating the prolific cauſe: while you are making topical applications to the ſymptom, I am endeavouring to remove the diſeaſe.

You affirm that there is already an Union between the countries *. Do you cite the Regency to prove that it is a cloſe and firm one? Did you ſupport Mr. Fitzgerald's Bill to record your opinion of the preſent ſolidity of our connexion? And do you continue to truſt implicitly in that recreant Wax, which deſerted its poſt ſo ſhamefully in 1789, and left the field open to our two Houſes of Parliament?

But, "Union is a merging of the Iriſh Par-"liament in the Britiſh †." No; it is only a merger of it in the imperial Legiſlature. But ſuppoſe your poſition granted; what then? This vile meaſure, forſooth, will leave us in as ill a political ſituation as Wales or Yorkſhire are in at

* P. 61.

† Ibid.

preſent! Union does not take away our Parliament, it merely changes the reſidence of that body; and in regulating the number of Iriſh and Britiſh Repreſentatives in the United Legiſlature, ſtrikes that equitable proportion to the territory, population, and reſources of theſe reſpective limbs of the Empire,—which, while our Parliaments remained diſtinct, it was unneceſſary to ſtrike; and which, when ſettled, will leave this country in as ſecure a ſituation as any equal tract of territory in the Britiſh dominions now enjoys. But Mr. Pitt, in recommending this meaſure, has ſtated Ireland "as the "vulnerable part of the Empire—torn by contend-"ing factions*."—Was the ſtatement untrue in point of fact? or immaterial in point of argument for a change? For its truth we have ſome bloody documents, ſupported by the teſtimony of Hoche and Humbert, and an hoſt of foreign enemies and domeſtic traitors: we have the repreſentations of Tone to the Government of France, as to the ſtate of Ireland, ſo long ago as 1793†; and the Report of our Committees of Secrecy as to its more recent ſituation. To thoſe who are friendly to our connexion with Great Britain, is it no argument for a change of the nature of that connexion, that its preſent ſtate expoſes it to the foe's endeavours to diſſolve it? and is there no ground for preſuming, that the meaſure which identifies this country with Britain, muſt render it as little vulnerable as our

* P. 62.

† This appeared on the Trial of Jackſon for High Treaſon.

enemies

enemies think this latter diſtrict of the Empire to be at preſent? It is not the "Roll of Parchment *" which will effect the change; it is the operation of thoſe proviſions which that Parchment will contain, the cordiality which it will announce and record; the liberal and cementing ſyſtem which it will legalize and introduce.

But Union, inſtead of aſſuaging, tranquillizing, and fortifying this country, "will deprive Ireland "of the reſident gentry and upper ranks;" (with their amazing and edifying ſtock of good morals and good example!) will rob "villages and eſtates "of their benevolent protectors; and encouraging "land-jobbers and pirates, will degrade the hoſpi-"tality of the old manſion-houſes into the nig-"gardly penury of agents' dwellings †."—It muſt be confeſſed, that if this be the neceſſary conſequence of Union, it is difficult to conceive what object the Britiſh Miniſter could have in deſiring it; or how the Iriſh Lords came to vote as they did on the firſt day of our Seſſion: nay, how on the ſame day there came to be a majority on that ſide in the Houſe of Commons. Our Lords muſt have been ſtrangely blind to their own intereſts; our Commons under the temporary influence of an extraordinary deluſion; and Mr. Pitt, who has not uſually paſſed for a ſilly perſonage, muſt be acting under the groſſeſt infatuation. Apprehenſive that Ireland is not ſufficiently diſcontented, nor France enough

* P. 63.

† P. 64.

diſpoſed

diſpoſed to take advantage of her diſcontents, he muſt be ſuppoſed eager to adopt a ſyſtem, of which the manifeſt effect will be to render this country more vulnerable, and the Empire leſs ſecure. I ſhall not examine the details of that picture which you have drawn, and which I take to be a mere fancy-piece, reſembling nothing which Union would produce to Ireland;—and *contraſtedly unlike to every thing which it has produced to Scotland.*

You deſire me to look to Scotland and Wales, which are united *. I do; and aſk you, are they leſs free than Ireland, or than England? Are they, in proportion to their natural advantages, leſs proſperous than we are? I have not heard of any ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act in Wales; or of the ſtern proviſions of a law for the ſuppreſſion of rebellion. I have heard indeed of a deſcent upon the Welſh coaſt;—and from comparing what happened on that occaſion, with what took place on the landing of the French at Killala, I conclude that Union has no tendency to impair allegiance; and that the United Welſh are as loyal as the inhabitants of diſunited Ireland. But you aſk, is Scotland, or is England herſelf, exempt from the taint of diſaffection †? and you infer, particularly from the caſe of Scotland, that Union is no protection. I am content to meet you on this ground; and to aſſert that Ireland has been the foyer of conſpiracy, and centre of that ſedition of which the flames may,

* P 67. † Ibid.

in

in a leſs degree, have reached other quarters of the Empire. Thus, if a compariſon of the ſituation of the reſpective parts of the Empire proves any thing, as I admit it does, it proves that Union would contribute to the tranquillity of Ireland.

It demonſtrates what was too evident to need being ſhown; that by diminiſhing the chances of ſeparation, you will diſcourage *thoſe attempts at it which have diſturbed our country*; and that the more complete is the connexion the leſs eaſily can it be diſſolved.

Theſe conſiderations lead me to a part of this diſcuſſion, which, I confeſs, I do not enter on without embarraſſment. To encounter you, on a point of commerce, would require uncommon ſtrength; and unfortunately my qualification is uncommon weakneſs. But I derive courage from the impregnable truth of the opinion which I am ſupporting: from the concurrence of Mr. Pitt, who recommends this meaſure; who purſues it, you ſay, with financial views, and whom you admit to be an eminently able financier;—which it requires no profound commercial inveſtigations to pronounce he could not be, if he ſought to carry a meaſure detrimental to the proſperity of Ireland.

On the whole, therefore, I meet you even upon this ground, with much the ſame ſuperſtitious confidence in the juſtice of my cauſe, as in the days of chivalry

chivalry would have induced me to throw down my gage, with a "God defend the right!" againſt ſome abler combatant than myſelf.

"How, or why," ſay you, "ſhould Union diffuſe Britiſh wealth, or induce Britiſh capital to "ſettle here * ?"—Let me ſelect one from a thouſand anſwers, and ſay, by promoting our tranquillity.

But how will it promote this? I have already tried, and may, before I have done, again endeavour to ſhow. Meantime let me obſerve, that the queſtion which I have imputed to you withdraws us from the preſent inquiry, and admits, that if Union promotes tranquillity it muſt advance our commerce.

In truth, this is an admiſſion which, *important as it is*, you yet cannot avoid making. You cannot avoid admitting, that without internal harmony, all other requiſites to commercial greatneſs are unavailing; there can be neither induſtry, nor its creature, wealth. In the ſtorms of a diſturbed political atmoſphere, commerce will

"Forbid her gems to ſwell, her ſhades to riſe,
"Nor truſt her bloſſoms to the churliſh ſkies."

It is no declamation, it is ſound reaſon, to affirm, that in eſtabliſhing tranquillity Union muſt ſo pro-

* P. 68.

mote our trade, as that even ſuppoſing (contrary to the fact) it in ſome reſpects reſtrained it, yet it muſt, on the average, be eminently beneficial. It is no proof of an argumentative, but of a little, mind, to withdraw from this grand and general view of the ſubject,—to loſe ourſelves, and perplex our hearers, in petty calculations. Yet often have I ſeen wide views miſtaken for extravagance, and the minutiæ of imbecility worſhipped as wiſdom and diſcretion. It is no flouriſh, it is a truth—to ſtate that by removing the terrors which obſcure and blaſt our land, we reinſtate it in the poſſeſſion of whatever advantages Nature gave it, and relieve the Britiſh poſſeſſor of capital from all apprehenſions of availing himſelf of thoſe advantages, and ſettling it in that part of the Empire where it will be moſt productive. I will aſk any candid man what, after Union, *political* difference there could be between Ireland and the ſame quantity of Britiſh territory in England? or what ſhould deter the capitaliſt from eſtabliſhing himſelf in this diſtrict of the Empire, if its *natural* ſituation made it ſuitable to his purpoſes? Will any man deny that Ireland is poſſeſſed of eminent natural advantages? or that hitherto ſome fatal impediment has prevented them from being fruitful? No man will be believed who controverts either poſition. No man can expect credit who affects to doubt that the diſtinctneſs of the kingdoms, and conſequent ſuppoſed inſecurity of their connexion,—the convulſions which have depreciated the value of property, and damped

damped the ſpirit of commercial enterpriſe and exertion,—and which having aimed at deſtroying the connexion, might be attributed to that diſtinctneſs which rendered it inſecure,—the views of our enemies directed peculiarly to this country, and involving a preſumption that they diſcovered ſome frailty in the connexion,—that theſe, I ſay, were cauſes adequate to reſtrain our commerce, and deter capital from ſettling amongſt us,—and that they are cauſes which Union would remove.

Obſerve the language which the Dean of Glouceſter puts into the mouths of certain Engliſh manufacturers, who were oppoſing the puninefs of their ſelfiſh details to the proſperity of the Empire: —"They (the Iriſh) would run away with our "trade." (You differ from this conjecture of the Engliſh traders.)—"Who," replies the Dean, "would run away with it? or where would they "run to?"—"Why, truly, our own people (the "Iriſh) would carry ſome part of a manufacture "from us to themſelves."—"But what detriment "would this be to the public? The people of York-"ſhire have done the ſame by Glouceſterſhire and "Wiltſhire *."—Thus this writer admitted (and the Engliſh traders urged), that Union would carry capital into Ireland; but he wiſely added, that this would not be a loſs to England, but an acquiſition to the Empire.

* Dean Tucker's Propoſal.

Truly has the Britiſh Miniſter aſſerted, that the intereſts of the two countries ſhould be taken together, and that a man cannot ſpeak as a true Iriſhman without ſpeaking as a true Engliſhman; nor *vice verſa* *. Union could not contribute to Britiſh greatneſs without increaſing the proſperity of Ireland. The imperial advantages which it produced would not ſtagnate in England; they muſt ultimately circulate through all the limbs of the Britiſh Empire.

Having proteſted againſt their concluſiveneſs, I attend you into your details.

After enumerating the four principal manufactures of England, you affirm that the want of fuel will prevent their migrating into Ireland †.

Suppoſe, however improbable, that they ſhould not; and what does this prove? only that the capital which travelled hither, would employ itſelf in a mode more conformable to the natural ſoil, means, and ſituation of this country.

But you forget the comparative cheapneſs of labour and proviſion here. Undoubtedly in England, a manufacture in which fuel was wanting, would not travel from the neighbourhood of a plen-

* See Mr. Pitt's Speech, of which, ſince I began this Letter, I have obtained a copy.

† P. 69.

tiful

tiful colliery to a country where coals were ſcarcer, while the price of food and labour remained the ſame. But (not to mention that the objection will not apply to the chance of manufactures being eſtabliſhed on our coaſts) the comparative lowneſs of wages and rate of proviſion here, might more than compenſate the greater dearneſs of fuel, and either afford, on the average, a temptation, or, at leaſt, ſo equaliſe the oppoſite inducements, in this reſpect, as to leave the adventurer free to weigh the reſpective benefits of an Iriſh and Engliſh ſituation in other points.—Nay again, theſe other advantages might ſo predominate on the ſide of Ireland as to redeem the objection of ſcarcity of fuel,—though not compenſated in the degree ſuppoſed, by the cheapneſs of that food and labour, which are as requiſite as coals can be to a manufacture.—Beſides, what ſhould prevent Britiſh adventure from putting an end to all your arguments by finding coal in Ireland? It is true that in p. 69 you ſay ſhe has it not; but in p. 88 you acknowledge that "Coal exiſts in Ireland, which we have never "looked for effectually, but for which neceſſity "may compel us to ſearch."—It may be the mere want of capital which has hitherto prevented a ſucceſsful ſearch;—and the numerous other advantages which this country offers might very probably cauſe its being employed * (by working our collieries), to remove the only impediment which you ſuggeſt to the eſtabliſhment of manufactures.

* P. 70.

"Eng-

"England," you ſay, "finds a full call for all "ſhe makes; every year affords an increaſing de-"mand *."—What follows? a temptation to veſt more capital in buſineſs; a temptation which would immediately operate to ſend ſuch manufactures to tranquillized and united Ireland, as her ſituation gave opportunity for eſtabliſhing to advantage; and which, as by the Union the Empire waxed more ſtrong and proſperous, would operate ſtill more powerfully in favour of this country, both by encouraging enterpriſe, and by rendering Britain too ſmall a ſphere for its overgrown capital to move and act in.

The (conſtructive) bounty to the Iriſh manufacturer of forty ſhillings on every ton of imported iron, has not brought capital into Ireland †. Is your inference that Union may not introduce it?—I, for my part, can conceive that conſpiracy defeated—property ſecured—the connexion ſtrengthened—the people conciliated—the country tranquillized—the enemy baffled in all attempts at ſeparation—might operate more effectually to bring capital into Ireland than even a bounty of forty ſhillings a ton on imported iron. Then, indeed, this bounty might have its additional (though comparatively puny) effect, and tend to induce the ſettlement of a manufacture here.—But after Union "this bounty will be extinguiſhed ‡;" not abruptly, or to the diſcouragement of trade. The

* P. 70. † P. 69. ‡ Ibid.

ſyſtem

ſyſtem of protecting duties, according to the beſt commercial authorities, is founded on an erroneous principle: but it will not follow that what it was injudicious to eſtabliſh, it will therefore be wiſe too ſuddenly to demoliſh; and therefore you very truly ſtate that the articles of Union merely propoſe a *poſſible period* at which thoſe duties are to ceaſe *. Diſmiſs your fears—that "individuals will look to "winding up their buſineſs in order to withdraw "their capital againſt that period †."—They will be content to have trade nurſed as long as it continues weak; and will not prepare to withdraw their capital from a manufacture, becauſe it is likely ſoon to throw away its ſtaff, and ceaſe to lean on the protection which it has ceaſed to want.—"We im-"port iron at 12*s.* 6*d.*; Britain imports it at nearly "3*l.*: and ſuch import duty on this raw material "is fitted to our infant ſtate ‡."—If you be warranted in this laſt aſſertion, which I do not mean to controvert, I muſt, however, on that very account, diſſent from what you add; and deny that "every man concerned in the iron manufacture "here, muſt expect the United Parliament will "put theſe duties on a level §."—If the imperial Parliament have (as it may have) a diſcretion on this point,—the preſumption is, that it will ſo regulate, between Britain and Ireland, the import duties on the raw materials of manufacture as to proportion them to the maturity or infancy of theſe ſtates. Even ſuppoſe finance to be the object of the Mi-

* P. 92. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid.

miſter, yet to make Ireland productive he muſt make it affluent; to make the Empire thrive and flouriſh in all its parts, he muſt promote the proſperity of its Iriſh limb; and conſequently he will adopt meaſures that ſhall foſter our manufactures, and encourage looſe capital to fix itſelf amongſt us.

The ſame reaſoning will apply to what you ſay with reſpect to farmers. "Theſe," you obſerve, "muſt look with uncertainty to the continuance of "the corn bounties, and expect that the principles "on which thoſe bounties have been diſcontinued "from one part of Ireland to another, and from "the whole of it to Dublin will be extended, on a "ſimilar reaſoning, by the United Parliament to "the whole of the United Empire *."—You, Sir, I recollect, ſupported the diſcontinuance of thoſe corn bounties; I muſt preſume that you ſuffered them to remain until the farmer had ceaſed to require this encouragement; nor do I ſuppoſe, that an United Parliament would extend the like diſcontinuance to the whole of the United Empire, until agriculture, grown more vigorous, no longer wanted ſuch ſupport.

Much of what you urge appears to me to be objectionable in one of the following points of view; it either merely goes to ſhow what the terms of Union ſhould provide; or what ought to be the future conduct of the imperial Legiſlature,

* P. 92.

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(and therefore would be fit matter to offer to the United Parliament, or to ours, when the terms of Union were diſcuſſing);—or, ſecondly, your arguments reſt on the ſophiſtical aſſumption, that the ſituation of the countries, when united, will remain the ſame which it is, while they are diſtinct; and thus you debate the queſtion upon falſe premiſſes, and upon a ſuppoſition of circumſtances which will not then exiſt.

Of the firſt deſcription are your reaſonings in page 93 and 110. The firſt of which might have great weight with the United Parliament, or with the Commiſſioners, whoſe province it was to arrange the terms, to ſhow to them that different ſyſtems of taxation ſhould be purſued here and in Great Britain; and the ſecond might, in the ſame place, be equally efficacious, to prove that ſome ſpecial meaſures ſhould be adopted towards ſecuring the purity of our elections of members to the imperial Parliament. Of the ſecond deſcription is what you urge in page 70; where, becauſe the Engliſh trader has now the Iriſh market at his door, you conclude he will after Union continue to poſſeſs it; and found, on this hypotheſis, an argument againſt the meaſure *.

* I am not overlooking this, that, by Union, the market of each country will be opened to the other: I mean only to ſay that when trade is advanced in this country, the Iriſh conſumer may be ſupplied at home.

Your premiſſes in page 72 I better underſtand, than what is the concluſion which you would deduce from them. You ſtate the export of woollen cloth from Ireland to have diminiſhed ſo conſiderably within this century, that in the laſt year it amounted to little more than one-tenth of what it had been in 1698. This merely proves that of which we were not ignorant, and which ſeems not very much to the purpoſe, that the line of Iriſh trade has changed. Linen has, in the interval, become our ſtaple, and its export, as you inform us *, was in 1795 eighty-eight times greater as to quantity, and one hundred and thirty-ſeven times greater as to value than it had been in 1700.

But how does this prove that Union might not bring over Britiſh capital to eſtabliſh the woollen manufacture? You ſay †, we put down our woollen trade to oblige England. If ſo, with the aſſiſtance of her capital we may take it up again, without fear of diſpleaſing a country from which we ſhall have ceaſed to be diſtinct; whoſe jealouſies, by Union, we ſhall have ſwept away, and whoſe intereſts we ſhall have identified with our own. And here permit me to confeſs a difficulty which I have in reconciling your aſſertion ‡, that the woollen manufacture cannot travel into Ireland,—with your ſtatement, that the value of our woollen export was 110,000*l.* a hundred years ago §;—and that even under the diſadvantages of our preſent dearth

* P. 105. † P. 83. ‡ P. 69. 72. § P. 83.

of

of capital, woollen and cotton manufactures have been eſtabliſhed ſucceſsfully near Cork*.

Suppoſe, however, that this ſhould not be ſo;—that the great increaſe of agriculture, and of the linen manufacture, giving a greater profit in land than ſheep afford †, the conſequence ſhould be, that the Britiſh Settlers would not turn their capital to the woollen trade; but would engage in tillage or the linen trade, or fatten pork for the proviſion trade, (as you ſay they have begun to do in England ‡;) or enter upon any other commerce, more congenial to the circumſtances or habits of this country. What difference would this make? The object is, that capital ſhould be introduced into Ireland; not that it ſhould be employed in this or that particular way. Capital (next to tranquillity) is the great commercial want of this country; and capital, by introducing expenſive machinery, would remove that obſtacle to the eſtabliſhment of the cotton trade here, which you ſtate the great uſe of machinery in that manufacture to produce §. As to the ineffectual operation of Arkwright's patent as a bounty, I have already remarked with reſpect to the conſtructive bounty on imported iron, that the diſturbed ſtate of Ireland, and precarioufneſs of its connexion, (as well as thoſe habits of diſtinctneſs which diſcouraged the indiſcriminate diſſemination of capital through the entire Empire,) ſupplied diſſuaſives more than ſufficient to countervail the effect

* P. 97. † P. 72. ‡ P. 99. § P. 73.

of theſe light pecuniary inducements; and if Ark-wright's patent has expired in England,—yet let Union repeal the patent of Iriſh jacobiniſm and ſedition, and I defy the effects of the ceaſing of this bounty. In 1785 the Engliſh cotton manufacturers "were under great anxiety and uneaſineſs "leſt the Iriſh (in conſequence of an arrangement "which partially and inadequately achieved the "commercial effects of Union) ſhould draw over "all their workmen, all their trade, and all their "capitals, and be able to underſell them in their "own markets by at leaſt 13*l. per cent.* *"—It is probable that theſe apprehenſions were exorbitant; but it is alſo likely that they were not altogether deſtitute of foundation,—and how ſtrangely do they contraſt with your exclamations againſt the abſurdity of ſuppoſing that the cotton manufacture might, after Union, be eſtabliſhed here!

As to linen, you admit it to be "an article "which, if Britiſh capital could be induced over, "would very obviouſly invite it †."—But could not Britiſh capital be induced to ſettle here? you anſwer, No; becauſe ſcarcely any has ſettled amongſt us yet.—This indeed is a reaſon for deſpairing that ſo long as Ireland remains *in ſtatu quo*, Engliſh wealth will overflow its banks for her enrichment; but it would be tedious to repeat what I have already ſtated,—the very adequate preventives to the importation of Britiſh capital, which our diſtinct-

* P. 74. † P. 75.

neſs

neſs furniſhed, and which our Union muſt remove; it would be tireſome and ſuperfluous to inſiſt upon the impoſſibility of ſhowing any ſufficient cauſe (for its ſcarcity will not be urged), which, after Union, could reſtrain Britiſh capital from pouring into Ireland.

But it is mere parade, you think, to tell us that in conſequence of this meaſure we ſhall participate fully in the wealth and commerce of Great Britain. We are already as free to trade to all the world as ſhe is *. Yes;—on our *no* capital, and our *no* induſtry, we are at liberty to trade with all the world, and keeping civil and religious diſcord for our home conſumption, may export our traitors to Fort George, and deal in recruits with Pruſſia.

" What port in the known world can a Britiſh " ſhip go to from Britain that an Iriſh ſhip cannot " go with the ſame cargo from Ireland? What ar- " ticle can a Britiſh ſhip import into Britain or " Ireland, that an Iriſh ſhip cannot import equally " into Ireland or Britain? What manufacture can " Britain eſtabliſh or encourage, which Ireland is " not equally free to do? If new ſources of trade " ſhall be opened by conqueſt or by treaty, do they " not belong equally and at the ſame inſtant to " Ireland †?"—I have adopted literally you own expreſſions; and now would aſk you, if your liſt of queſtions be not a liſt of reaſons, Why, after

* P. 77. † Ibid.

Union,

Union, Britiſh capital ſhould be veſted here? more eſpecially if this country be, by nature, advantageouſly ſituated for trade (and that it is ſo eminently will not be denied),—if the rate of labour and price of proviſions be lower here than they are in England,—and if Britiſh capital be grown too bulky for the preſent limits of its exertion.

In page 79 you proceed to ſhow that our commercial intercourſe with England is in a higher degree beneficial to that country than to us. The evidence which you adduce of this does not thoroughly bear you out; for the ſtatement which you take from the Cuſtom-houſe books leaves a balance againſt Britain; and as "the Cuſtom-houſe value," you ſay *, "ſerves every purpoſe of proportion or "compariſon," it ſeems as if you might have abided by it on this queſtion of *compariſon*; more particularly as it is the proof to which, page 90, you have reſorted to ſhow how good a cuſtomer this iſland is to Britain. To me, however, this adjuſtment of benefits ſeems ſo little pertinent to the preſent inquiry,—and I am ſo perſuaded that the countries are mutually of incalculable value to each other, that I ſhall not enter farther into the diſcuſſion.

I might perhaps, upon the ſame ground, decline reviewing your inquiry, whether our Linen Trade depends on the Britiſh Parliament †; but yet muſt

* P. 90. † P. 8.

be

muſt be permitted to attend you ſhortly through this part of your inveſtigation.

At firſt (ſeemingly admitting that we are indebted to Britain for this manufacture), you ſay that ſhe is bound by compact to encourage our Linen Trade. I am ſure ſhe is bound by intereſt to encourage this and every other Iriſh fabric; and, I believe, ſhe ſees what is her true intereſt in this reſpect;—but what was the nature of this compact, or when or where it was entered into, you have not informed us; and I, for my part, do not know.

The Britiſh meaſures which protect our Linen Trade are, firſt, their duties on the foreign Linens; and ſecondly, their bounty on the export of Iriſh Linens. Does not the continuance of theſe meaſures depend on the Britiſh Parliament? How then can it be denied that our Linen Trade is foſtered by their protection? But neither duties nor bounties were given for us! To inquire ſcrupulouſly into this would, I think, be very childiſh. Facts and conſequences are obvious, but motives are more abſtruſe; and here the queſtion is more as to the utility of the grant than the generoſity of the grantor. Now as to the value of a conceſſion, affecting that linen which, according to Mr. Pitt, conſtitutes four fifths, and according to you, about one half*, of our exports to all the world, no reaſonable doubt can be entertained; and as to what

* P. 86.

you ſtate, p. 85, in diſparagement of Britiſh kindneſs, it ſeems to me to prove no more than this, that while ſhe was encouraging our linen manufacture, ſhe alſo tried to ſerve her own carrying trade.

I beg to decline following you in your inquiries into the reſpective powers of Britain and Ireland, to hurt each other by a war of duties and prohibitions. You avow yourſelf that it is an unpleaſant diſcuſſion; and I admit, that ſo long as the two countries remain *diſtinct*, they have the power of interchanging injuries ſo material, that it is not worth inquiring which could do moſt miſchief to the other, but would be better to deprive both of their noxious powers, and preclude all wars of duties and prohibitions by *an Union*.

But Union, by increaſing the number of abſentees, would injure the trade and manufactures of Ireland*! Prove this to the Britiſh Miniſter, and I will anſwer for his abandoning the meaſure. But if it does not "take a great portion of the "men of property to England," and replace thoſe it takes by an uſeful deſcription of perſons, the ground of your apprehenſion about our trade will be removed. "No abſentee," you ſay, "can expect to be elected a member of the United "Parliament: and every member muſt be a man "of conſiderable property†." Is not the neceſ-

* P. 91. † Ibid.

ſary

ſary inference from your own ſtatements this—that if a ſeat in the United Parliament ſhall be, as it muſt be, an object of ambition, an inducement will be held out to men of conſiderable property to reſide in Ireland? Let me briefly add upon this ſubject, that Union has not hurt the trade or manufactures of Scotland. You quote *, with conſiderable triumph, the language of the Britiſh Miniſter. He has moſt frankly and liberally ſaid that, until lately, the ſyſtem of Britain to this country "had been harſh and unjuſt, *and as impo-* "*litic as it was oppreſſive.*" Will Britain renew the conduct from which ſhe had departed, and which her government has ſo deſcribed? Will any Miniſter, though he was no partial friend to Ireland, reſume a policy which Lord Grenville has acknowledged to have been "*abſurd*, as well "as barbarous," and which, "however it might "have contributed," ſays Mr. Pitt, "to the par-"tial benefit of diſtricts in Britain, *promoted not the* "*real ſtrength of the Empire?*" Thus does not the policy which Britain has fully recogniſed; or, if any man prefers a more jealous and invidious epithet, does not Britiſh ſelfiſhneſs afford a guarantee for Britiſh kindneſs? and need we fear an Union with an adequate Iriſh Repreſentation? Why call our hundred Repreſentatives a mockery †? Would their voices be more feeble than thoſe of the Yorkſhire Members? Would their ſentiments be

* P. 94. † P. 95.

leſs attended to? Would their local knowledge be more neglected? Why idly contraſt the Iriſh with the Britiſh Members, when they are the indiſcriminate Repreſentatives of a cemented Empire? when the proſperity of Ireland is the aggrandizement of that Britain, over whoſe intereſts you ſuppoſe the 558 will ſo cloſely watch? May not an Iriſh Member ſhare in, or even guide the Councils of the Empire? I ſhall not dwell on ſuch a man's predilection for his country, for his duty undoubtedly would be impartially to conſult the intereſts of the whole United State; but, at leaſt, Ireland would not ſuffer under ſuch an adminiſtration.

But admitting that articles might be deviſed to ſecure the Iriſh trade and purſe * (againſt thoſe whoſe intereſt it is to protect both), in the alleged omnipotence of Parliament you diſcern a power to defeat or mutilate this compact. Excuſe me, if I ſay, that ſuch reaſoning is unworthy of you. It ſoars *inter apices juris*, in order to perch on a ſuppoſition, ſubverſive in its conſequences, and refuted by experience. "The imperial Legiſlature," as I have on a former occaſion ſtated, "may be "competent to disfranchiſe Wales or Yorkſhire, "or to violate the terms on which the Sifter Coun- "tries ſhall have been united; but I ſee no moral "poſſibility of their applying their tranſcendent

* P. 95 and 96.

"authority

" authority to ſuch a purpoſe*." If, by a maxim of the conſtitution, the King can do no wrong, ſtill leſs can that Legiſlature of which he but conſtitutes a part; and if we are to ramble into the boundleſs regions of abſtract poſſibility, I will reply, that ſubſtantially to violate the articles of the Union, would be to ſubvert the imperial Conſtitution, and be one of thoſe extreme and not ſuppoſable caſes, which might abſolve the Iriſh ſubject from his allegiance, and juſtify an appeal from the Legiſlature to the ſword.

But we are to look to Scotland † in vindication of your fears. I imagine myſelf to have been one of the firſt, to whoſe lot it fell to expoſe the abſurdity of alleging the Malt Tax as an infringement of the Scotch treaty of Union. The taſk was free from difficulty, and was performed by a ſhort quotation from the hiſtories of that period ‡. But the violation on which you chooſe to rely, is not the tax on malt, but upon income. In urging this objection, you deſert the ſpirit, in order to faſten on the letter of the treaty. I anſwer it by obſerving ſhortly, 1ſt, that all taxes muſt ultimately affect income of every kind; and therefore, if your reaſoning were well founded, there would be but one way of avoiding a violation of the Scottiſh Union, viz. by abſtaining from taxing Scotland altogether.

* An Addreſs to the People of Ireland.

† P. 96. ‡ Addreſs, p. 91.

2dly, The very ſpirit and object of that proviſion in the treaty which you notice, the very end which the Scotch nation muſt have propoſed to itſelf in inſerting it, was that which is accompliſhed by the Income Tax; namely, the taxing Scotland in proportion to its means, and ſtriking between the contribution of the two countries, the ſame ratio that there was between their wealth and income. 3dly, The recent exigencies of that united kingdom, of which North Britain is an integral part, imperiouſly demanded of the Scots, as they tendered their exiſtence, to contribute to its preſervation.

I ſhall not follow you in your examination of the effects of Union upon Cork. That quarter of the kingdom is probably beſt acquainted with its own intereſts, and entertains an opinion different from yours. I ſhall content myſelf by anſwering the queſtion, and the remarks, which you apply to this part of the diſcuſſion.

You aſk, "what could induce the eſtabliſhment "of a dock-yard after a Union more than be-"fore *?" The abolition of all fears and jealouſies that were the creatures of our diſtinctneſs; the abrogation of all maxims of ſuſpicious policy; the intimate blending and identification of the two countries; the taking away from Britain every

* P. 98.

queſtion

queſtion upon the ſubject of where ſhe ſhould eſtabliſh a dock-yard, except the ſingle one of, which was the beſt naval ſtation?

In order to conſole Cork, however, for the diſappointment which you predict, you remark that no trade exiſts where great dock-yards are eſtabliſhed. I do not, for my part, know how the fact may be; but ſuppoſing it to be as you ſtate it, I preſume other adequate cauſes could be aſſigned for that want of trade, which I am unable to ſee how the eſtabliſhment of a dock-yard ſhould produce.

But we ſhould not addreſs ourſelves to Cork; we ſhould ſpeak to Ireland. You do ſo when you aſk, if we "want to be better than well*?" I proteſt if we be well, the ſymptoms of our political health are very ſtrange ones. I ſpeak not of that late rebellion, which you may tell me was but a criſis that has operated to throw off impurities, and reſtore the vigour of our conſtitution. I ſpeak of thoſe military eſcorts which attend our Judges round their circuits, to protect them from the rude and ramping health of our people; I ſpeak of the number of troops which have come from England, to bear witneſs to the political ſanity of Ireland; I ſpeak of that regimen of martial law which the Legiſlature has juſt preſcribed, to

* P. 100.

check

check the imprudent frolics of an over-vigorous people, and prevent their health from becoming too plethoric. I could enumerate other ſymptoms, but ſhould tire my reader and myſelf; and therefore ſhall conclude, by doubting whether the phyſic which you are for rejecting, be quite ſo unneceſſary as you think it.

In page 100 (as I follow in your winding courſe), I find you recurring to the example of Scotland, and denying all ſimilarity between our ſituation and hers.

Scotland, you tell us *, "by the junction of the "crowns, became ſubject to Engliſh influence, in "all her national concerns;" their Darien ſettlement was deſtroyed by the jealous interference of England †; Scotch feelings were continually hurt by the haraſſing proceedings of their "powerful "and jealous rival," who depreſſed their country in "her trade, and in every thing of value in her "ſtate ‡;" and upon all theſe grounds, you conclude that Scotland had reaſon to accept an Union, and to expect in it a remedy for the grievances above mentioned.

From Great Britain's "partial conduct againſt "this country §," from her having, "for forty "years, haraſſed our victualling trade by em-

* P. 100. † P. 101. ‡ Ib. § P. 93.

"bargos,"

"bargos *," and from the oppreſſive and jealous tenour of her entire conduct, you conclude that an Union muſt injure Ireland.

Are the above arguments conſiſtent? or, by which of them will you abide? If your premiſſes were admitted, your firſt reaſoning would be the juſteſt, and would extend to prove the utility of Union to this country.

But, in pointing out the diſſimilarity of our ſituation to that of Scotland, you obſerve that ſhe was connected with England only by the *accidental* circumſtance of the Engliſh Crown having deſcended upon her Monarch †. On this, allow me to obſerve, that as high-ſounding phraſes will not ſtrengthen, neither can diſparaging epithets diminiſh, the firmneſs of that connexion, by which two countries are held together. That connexion, which, by ſtyling it accidental, you imply to have been precarious, and unlikely to endure, depended on a no leſs ſtrong ſupport than thoſe rules and maxims of hereditary deſcent, which in England and Scotland were the ſame, and which have laſted to the preſent day; and, if the Abdication of James II. and conſequent Revolution, Act of Settlement, &c. had not operated on the Britiſh ſyſtem a change as rare and violent as it was uſeful (a change, againſt which, if they had happened to

* P. 97. † P. 100.

encounter, our ſealing-wax and parchment would have made as ineffectual a ſtand as the venerable rules of hereditary right); I ſay, if this extraordinary change had not taken place, that Union of the Engliſh and Scottiſh Crowns, which had happened on the demiſe of Elizabeth, would have continued as long as there were heirs of the Houſe of Stuart. And thus much for the durability of the Scotch and Engliſh connexion (in the junction of their Crowns) as contraſted with that which holds theſe countries together, accompanied with all its appendages, of Great Seal, Annexation Act, &c.

You deny that Scotland had a Conſtitution *like* Britain *: I might have controverted your poſition, though you had but denied her to have had ſubſtantially the ſame. When a man aſſerts that an eſtabliſhment, conſiſting of three eſtates, a repreſentative body (particularly organized, but ſtill repreſenting the ſame claſs in the ſtate as our Commons do), a chamber of hereditary nobility, graduated analogouſly to thoſe of England, and holding their titles by like grants, and with ſimilar limitations, an hereditary King, the chief Executive Magiſtrate, and poſſeſſing a right of negative on the proceedings of the Legiſlature, that this eſtabliſhment is not like the Britiſh Conſtitution: I cannot argue with ſuch a man; I can only expreſs my ſurpriſe. The Arrangement of 1706, however,

* P. 101.

has

has practically and ſucceſsfully diſputed your opinion; and by blending the Scottiſh Lords and Commons with the Engliſh, has recorded them to have been reſpectively homogeneous claſſes.

" We," however, " are not only united to the " Crown, but to the Empire: our friends, our " enemies the ſame; and our intereſts, as well as " laws, binding us in that Union *."

Why then, in the name of Heaven, if a ſingle flaw can be diſcovered, on which to fix a doubt of the permanence of our connexion, ſhould we ſhrink from conſolidating it, by the moſt intimate incorporation? We ſhould thereby loſe our free Conſtitution! I deny it. Prove to me that we ſhall, and I will vote againſt an Union. Meantime, you muſt allow me here to cite a paſſage from your Speech †, accompanying it with ſome qualifying parentheſes of my own.

" In preſerving" *(the diſtinctneſs of)* " this Con- " ſtitution, we retain all the means of trade;" *(except capital, induſtry, internal quiet, and that ſtability of connexion, which may attract the capital of Britain:)* " whereas, if we ſacrifice it," *(by blending our diſtinct eſtabliſhment, with a ſyſtem analogous in theory, and better adminiſtered in practice,)* " wealth " will vaniſh, when freedom is baniſhed," *(by*

* P. 193. † P. 104.

our obtaining thoſe protections which ſecure it to Great Britain.) "We have more to loſe than mere "wealth, or trade: we have to loſe ſound ge- "nuine liberty;" *(by participating in all the privileges of the Britiſh Conſtitution.)*

In page 104, waving thoſe arguments which you had founded on the alledged difference of our preſent ſituation, from that of Scotland at the period of the Union, you (for a moment) admit their ſimilarity; but contend "that every "argument drawn from the Arrangement of 1796, "ſtrongly urges us againſt a ſimilar experi- "ment."

You doubt whether the increaſing proſperity of Scotland, ſince the Union, is properly attributable to that event. It is difficult to prove the affirmative or negative of ſuch a queſtion; and, beſides, requires evidence, which neither you nor I poſſeſs. A compariſon of the rates of Scottiſh progreſs, for fifty years before, and fifty years following the Union, would prove ſomething. If that progreſs appeared infinitely accelerated in the latter period, it might ſeem preſumable that that event had contributed to advance it; and this preſumption would become ſtill more violent, if it appeared, on inveſtigation, that the interval between Scotch and Engliſh proſperity, had been greater before the Union than it was ſince. For, that "progreſſive ſtate of the world,

"for

"for the laſt century*," to which, rather than to this meaſure, you impute the proſperity of Scotland, would have operated in equal degree upon both countries; and therefore, the decreaſe of diſparity between their greatneſs, would be fairly enough imputable to the Union. That Arrangement would appear to have removed impediments to Scotch improvement; and by giving it the full uſe of whatever advantages it had from nature, to have enabled it to participate duly in the progreſs of the world.

"But has Scotland advanced in proſperity ſince "the Union, as much as Ireland†?" I preſume not. Spite of whatever miſchiefs were produced by Iriſh diſtinctneſs, I preſume not. This admiſſion I concede not to your proof: but to my own conviction. *Your* demonſtration is inadequate, and ſophiſtical. You meaſure the relative progreſs of the two countries, by mere compariſon of the advancement of their linen manufacture; without aſcertaining whether this has ſo predominated in Scotland as with us, whether it has been equally the ſtaple of both countries.

But I preſume the advancement of Ireland has been more conſiderable. I do not conceive Union to be a meaſure of ſufficient efficacy, to efface the diſtinctions of natural advantage, and prevent

* P. 104. † Ibid.

the proſperity of a country from bearing ſome proportion to theſe. It is enough, if it removes all political obſtacles to a country's greatneſs; and thus renders it more proſperous than diſunited it could have been. Ireland may be bleſſed with natural capacities, which have ſo far outweighed her political diſadvantages, as, after all, to let her outſtrip the proſperity of Scotland. But if united, I am ſatisfied ſhe will leave her ſtill more behind, and reap, at length, the full benefits of her ſoil and ſituation.

On the queſtion, however, whence Scotch proſperity has ariſen, I am content that we ſhould make a compromiſe if you think proper. I will abate ſomewhat of my certainty, that it has been produced by the Scottiſh Union, if you, on your part, will not ſo inexorably refer to the Settlement of 1782, every advance which has been made by Ireland ſince that period *. Suppoſe, that in fourteen years from 1782, Iriſh exports roſe as much as they had done in eighty years before; we know, that in the caſe of individuals, and of nations, improvement does not proceed regularly, but *par ſecouſſes*; we know that the recent acceleration of which you boaſt, may have ariſen, not from the Arrangements of 1782, but from that free trade of 1780, which an Union, inſtead of cramping, would practically promote; we *do not* know but a

* P. 107.

compariſon in the caſe of Scotland would furniſh the ſame difference between her rates of progreſs, ſince, and previous to, 1782; we *do* know, that latterly, the advances of England have been incomparably more rapid than they were before, and that ſhe may have hurried us along as an imperial relative in thoſe ſtrides. At all events you know (for you have ſtated) that "the argument is ſhallow "which attributes every increaſe of trade in Scot-"land, from that day to this, to the Union *;" and the argument which is ſhallow, as to Scotland, cannot, as to Ireland, be more profound; nor can the Settlement of 1782 be entitled to a privilege which you deny to the Arrangement of 1706.

"The queſtion between England and Scotland," you ſay, "was Union or Separation †." I doubt whether, in the preſent caſe, the queſtion be widely different, and found my doubts on events too melancholy and too notorious for enumeration; I might found them on the mere Reports of our Secret Committees, and they would ſtand. But the propoſed Union "leads to ſeparation ‡." Prove this to its ſupporters, and I will anſwer for their converſion. Can you ſeriouſly imagine that the Miniſter, or the Legiſlature of Great Britain, would propoſe a meaſure which "leads to ſepara-"tion?" What has brought the Britiſh militia into Ireland? Would the government which ſent

* P. 104. † P. 107. ‡ Ibid.

thoſe

thoſe to fight, if neceſſary, for the connexion, lend its hand to a meaſure which "leads to ſepa-"ration?" Nay, Sir, we ſhould liſten with diſtruſt even to *arguments* which were employed to prove any thing ſo incredible as this; and ſo long as you confine yourſelf to mere paradoxical *aſſertion*, ſpite of your merited weight, we cannot liſten to you at all.

You aſk, why Mr. Dundas "has not told us "the opinion of his countryman, Mr. Adam "Smith, on the effects of the Scottiſh Union * ?" I am ſure I cannot tell. He might, with perfect ſecurity, have reſorted to his authority, while, for you to quote it, appears rather indiſcreet. Adam Smith has explicitly declared it as his opinion, that, by an Union with Great Britain, Ireland would obtain not only commercial, but *other more important advantages*; that this meaſure would dry up a ſource of diſcord and oppreſſion; and that "without it, the inhabitants of this "country were not likely, for ages, to conſider "themſelves as one people †." A writer who holds theſe ſentiments with reſpect to Union, is not exactly the authority which an Anti-unioniſt ſhould chuſe to cite.

Having, in a ſpeech which I made in Parliament, in January laſt, and which has, ſince that time,

* P. 106.

† Inquiry into the Nature and Cauſes of the Wealth of Nations, Book v. c. 3.

appeared

appeared in print, diſcuſſed the queſtion of Parliamentary competence pretty fully, I ſhall (without meaning to refer my reader to what has been ſaid or written by ſo poor an authority as myſelf) yet decline repeating here what I have thus already offered to the public, and ſhall content myſelf, in anſwer to what you urge upon this head, with obſerving briefly, that to diſpute the competence of Parliament is to deny the conſtitutional exiſtence of the united kingdom of Great Britain, and ſhake to its foundation his Majeſty's (not hereditary) title to his Scottiſh Crown, nay, may go to impeach the right of the Houſe of Hanover (under the Act of Settlement) to the Throne of England; that it is to contradict the expreſs poſitions, as well as to ſubvert the conſequential doctrines of ſome of the ableſt conſtitutional and legal writers, including names no leſs reſpectable than thoſe of Blackſtone, Coke, and Monteſquieu, and operates to give inevitable admiſſion to a republican principle, which will degrade Parliament from its high ſtation, and deck a fierce and unwieldy multitude in the ſpoils of legiſlative ſupremacy.

The ſecurity of the ſubject againſt Parliamentary domination ariſes, not from the limited authority of the Legiſlative, but from the frame and conſtruction of Parliament itſelf, in which the various and conflicting intereſts of the State are ſo well poiſed, as mutually to control the encroachments of each other; and if, ſpite of theſe precautions, a weak

and wicked Parliament ſhould yet abuſe its vaſt authority, it might thereby legitimate inſurrection, and pull its own power about its ears; but with that power would periſh the whole fabric of the conſtitution: whilſt this endures, the theoretic power of Parliament being unbounded, we are relieved from all preliminary trouble of inquiring into its right of accompliſhing any meaſure which is before it, and may proceed at once to inveſtigate the merits of the plan itſelf, ſince, in demonſtrating its utility, we ſhall bring it within the ſphere of Parliamentary competence to achieve. It is a glorious prerogative of the Britiſh Conſtitution, that there is no political bleſſing for the people which lies beyond the reach of their Parliament to obtain.

The grounds I have thus laid, Sir, will furniſh a refutation of your hypotheſis *, that if the omnipotence of Parliament can conſolidate two ſeparate Legiſlatures, it may equally conſolidate the three eſtates of each, or take the purſe of the nation out of the cuſtody of the Commons.

No, Sir; this conſolidation would be no bleſſing, but a curſe, a manifeſt ſubverſion of the liberties of the people: ſuch a meaſure is, on the face of it, ſo miſchievous and deformed, ſo repugnant, not only to the principles, but to the very exiſtence

* P. 108.

of

of our Conſtitution, that its adoption by Parliament muſt not, even in the way of hypotheſis, be ſuppoſed: "there are points," as you truly obſerve, "where the powers of the Legiſlature end, and "thoſe of the people at large begin*;" and it may be added, that ſuch extreme caſes can never furniſh illuſtration; it may be added, that, under no poſſible circumſtances, could a conſolidation of the three Eſtates of the Legiſlature be beneficial. But can it be contended, will you contend, that under no ſuppoſable circumſtances, on no deviſable terms, could an incorporation of theſe two parts of the Empire be advantageous? And would our Parliament be then incompetent to obtain its benefits for the people? Muſt we, as a preliminary ſtep to its attainment, depoſe Parliament from its ſupremacy? and, in doing ſo, diſſolve the Government, and annihilate our whole eſtabliſhment? You will not contend for ſo ruinous a doctrine; and, in abandoning it, will acknowledge Parliament to be competent to enact Union.

I have now, Sir (I hope conſiſtently with that reſpect which is ſo juſtly due to you), gone through your ſeveral arguments *ſeriatim*, and given them ſuch anſwers as my ſmall abilities could ſupply; but whether or not I have ſucceeded in refuting you, it is not for me, but for the public, to pronounce.

* P. 108.

Let me here, while I am haſtening to my concluſion, be allowed to introduce one or two obſervations, though not *directly* in anſwer to any thing which has fallen from you.

You have more than once contraſted the 100 Iriſh, with the 558 Britiſh repreſentatives. Let us purſue this idea by examining thoſe contraſts which the Parliament of this country will internally afford. The members for counties, cities, and commercial towns, will be found to form a ſmall portion of the 300, compared with thoſe who ſit for what we call *cloſe* boroughs. The meaning of this epithet, "cloſe," it is not my buſineſs to determine; but I believe it is neither untrue nor unparliamentary to ſuggeſt, that this majority of our Houſe of Commons does not more truly repreſent the landed and commercial intereſts of this country, than they are repreſented by the 64 county, and the city members. Now I have heard it ſaid, and I believe with truth, that if an Union ſhould take place, the ſyſtem of Iriſh repreſentation was likely to be modified in this reſpect, that the entire number of country members remaining, and the principal commercial towns alſo returning repreſentatives, the number of thoſe who ſit for boroughs would be materially abridged. Indeed it is plain they muſt be ſo; if the number of repreſentatives ſecured to Ireland by the terms of Union be a hundred. For when from this ſum we deduct 64 county members, and ſome repreſentatives for

cities and commercial towns, the number remaining for borough members (by an Arrangement reſembling the Scotch, perhaps) to make up, will be extremely limited. Thus the Iriſh portion of the imperial Parliament would be compoſed wholly of the genuine repreſentatives of our landed and commercial intereſts; of men whoſe own welfare was cloſely allied to the proſperity of their country. If ſeats in Parliament were venal, the benefit reſulting to this country from ſuch an organization would be the more ſignal; for this abridgment of the comparative number of boroughs would prevent Britiſh money from gaining a ſeat amongſt our Legiſlators, and would ſecure us a thoroughly Iriſh repreſentation.

If this be ſo, it ſeems to me that Union affords the only probable or ſecure path to thoſe grand popular meaſures, of which, for ſome years back, we have heard ſo much. It might give Catholic Emancipation, and muſt produce Parliamentary Reform.

I imitate your example * in declining thoſe diſcuſſions which regard the ſtate of our religion in this kingdom, both becauſe I have on a former occaſion † publiſhed my opinions on this ſubject, and becauſe I concur with you in conſidering it to be a

* P. 111.

† From p. 65 to 74, of an Addreſs to the People of Ireland.

delicate topic. Thus much, however, may, without impropriety, be ſaid, that this country is not a ſcene of the moſt perfect religious concord; that Adam Smith has ſuppoſed Union would mitigate religious prejudice, and make the inhabitants of Ireland conſider themſelves as one people—a conſummation which muſt be moſt devoutly wiſhed by every friend to the connexion, to the Empire, to his country; that the temper and genius of the times are not ſuch as to render this the propereſt moment for upholding an irritating ſyſtem with a ſtrong hand; that the ſituation is arduous and perplexing, in which, while it may perhaps be dangerous to grant, it is not liberal, if perfectly ſafe policy, to withhold; that Union would extricate us from ſo embarraſſing a dilemma, by making the religion of the people the religion of the State.

The tendencies of Union, in other reſpects, I have, in the foregoing pages, had occaſion to diſcuſs. If theſe were ſuch as you deſcribe, I ſhould heartily join with you to cry, No Union*! but, perſuaded as I am, that its tendencies would be to baffle all attempts at ſeparation; that by giving vigour to the Empire, it would give ſecurity to Ireland; that it might remove ſome of the riſks and difficulties which obſtruct ſound and moderate religious, or political reform; that it would bring an orderly rank of perſons in contact with the maſs of our people, and fill up, as it were,

* P. 107.

the

the chaſms of our incoherent community; that it would, by their example, improve the morals of our lower ranks, initiating them in induſtry, and communicating to them a taſte for the decencies of life; in a word, that it would raiſe and civilize our barbarous and degraded people, and fit them to enjoy the freedom it conferred; that it would bury, in a complete identification of intereſt, whatever jealouſies may have ſubſiſted between the kingdoms, would aſſuage that internal diſcord of which we have ſo long been the victims, and permanently enrich and tranquillize our country: ſatisfied as I am, that ſuch would be the effects of Union, I ſay to my countrymen, "Accept the "offer, and adhere to the Conſtitution of 1782*." Preſerve the Conſtitution which you then acquired; it muſt be invaluable; for it is that of Britain; but aboliſh a diſtinctneſs which impedes the practical enjoyment of its bleſſings, and is at variance with a connexion on which your happineſs depends.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c. &c.

Dublin, WILLIAM SMITH.
April 27, 1799.

* "Reject the offer, and adhere to the Conſtitution of 1782." *Speaker's Speech*, p. 107.

THE END.

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